
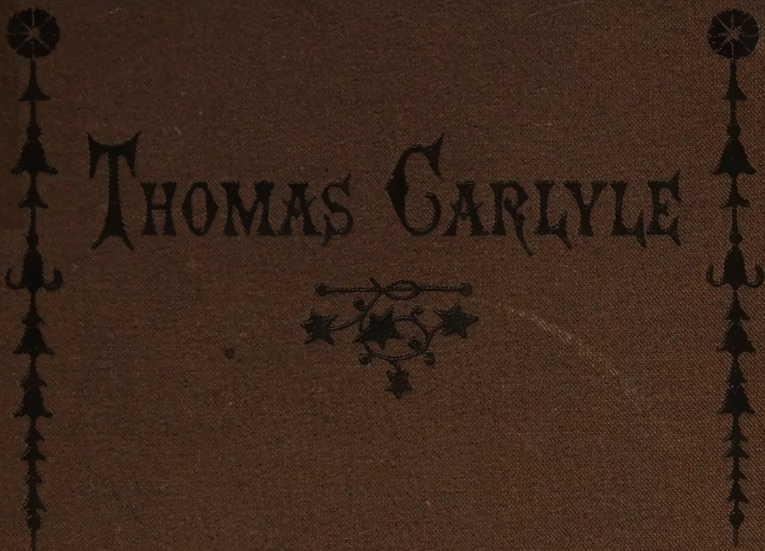


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T. Carlyle

THOMAS CARLYLE

BY

HENRY J. NICOLL

AUTHOR OF "GREAT SCHOLARS," "GREAT ORATORS," ETC.

EDINBURGH

MACNIVEN & WALLACE, PRINCES STREET

1881

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Mount Allison University

Ralph Pickard Bell

PREFACE.

IN the present volume I have, so far as possible, allowed the story of Carlyle's life to be told either by himself in his letters or by the narratives of those who were personally acquainted with him. All available sources of information have been searched, and every care taken to secure accuracy. It is hoped that, as a kind of repository for a large amount of floating literature about Carlyle, the book may be found to possess some degree of permanent value.

I have to express my thanks to Macvey Napier, Esq., for kindly permitting me to make use of the letters of Carlyle which appear in the "Selected Correspondence of Macvey Napier."

HENRY J. NICOLL.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS.

ECCLEFECHAN is a little village, containing some five hundred inhabitants, situated in the south-west of Scotland, about ten miles from the English border, and about sixteen miles from Dumfries. The name, said by antiquaries to be derived from *Ecclesia Fechani*, points back to old monkish times in the seventh century, when a certain legendary abbot, St Fechan, is said to have had a church in this district. Eighty years ago Ecclefechan was rather a bustling village, noted for its great cattle fairs, and kept in a state of constant animation by the daily passage to and fro of the stage-coach between London and Glasgow. Now, although the Caledonian Railway runs not far off, with a station a mile distant, it is a veritable Sleepy Hollow, and bears an unusually somnolent appearance.

In this sequestered hamlet Thomas Carlyle was born on the 4th of December 1795. His father, originally a stone-mason, afterwards a small farmer, is recorded to have been a worthy, straightforward, sagacious man, noted for his common sense, and his shrewd sarcastic remarks. His mother was cast in a gentler mould. More than ordinarily intelligent, she was filled with a deep religious feeling and possessed great sensibility.

She was her husband's second wife, and brought him eight children besides Thomas—three sons and five daughters. Except with a younger brother, John Aitken Carlyle, born in 1801, who attained some celebrity as the author of an excellent prose translation of Dante, Carlyle does not appear to have held much intercourse with his brothers and sisters. His parents were members of the Relief Church, a body afterwards incorporated with the United Presbyterians. It is a mistake to assert, as has often been done, that his father was an "elder of the Kirk." The minister of the church which the Carlyles attended was a certain Rev. John Johnstone, altogether unknown to fame. This Mr Johnstone was a great friend of Dr George Lawson of Selkirk, a famous light of the Relief Church at this time, whom Carlyle frequently saw and heard. After perusing Lawson's biography, he wrote that it had interested him not a little, "bringing present to me from afar, much that is good to be reminded of, strangely awakening many hopes, many thoughts, many scenes and recollections of forty or sixty years ago—all now grown very sad to me, but also very beautiful and solemn. It seems to me that I gather from your narrative, and from his own letters, a perfectly credible account of Dr Lawson's character, course of life, and labours in the world; and the reflection rises in me that there was not in the British Islands, perhaps, a more completely genuine, pious-minded, diligent, and faithful man. Altogether original, too, peculiar to Scotland, and, so far as I can guess,

unique even there and then. England will never know him out of any book, or, at least, it would take the genius of a Shakespeare to make him known by that method; but if England did, it might much and wholesomely astonish her. Seen in his intrinsic circle, no simple-minded, more perfect lover of wisdom do I know of in that generation. Professor Lawson, you may believe, was a great man in my boy-circle; never spoken of but with reverence and thankfulness by those I loved best. In a dim but singularly conclusive way, I can still remember seeing him, and even hearing him preach, though of that latter, except the fact of it, I retain nothing; but of the figure, face, tone, dress, I have a vivid impression."

Every writer is, and must be, to a certain extent his own biographer. Whether he designs it or not, he cannot help often making literary capital out of his own personal experience. Of none is this more true than of Carlyle. Letting alone the numerous autobiographical passages to be found in his other writings, "*Sartor Resartus*," as most are aware, is in all but form actually an autobiography; and no one can attempt to relate the story of Carlyle's life without making frequent reference to it. Diligent admirers of Carlyle have visited his birthplace, and ascertained that the description of Entepfuhl in "*Sartor Resartus*," as "standing in trustful derangement among the woody slopes; the paternal orchard flanking it as extreme outpost from below; the little *kuhbach* gushing kindly by among beech rows," is as accurate a picture of

Ecclefechan as could be written in a few lines. In the same way the descriptions of Father Andreas and Gretchen are close portraits of Carlyle's father and mother. Nor can we doubt that the description of Teufelsdröckh's juvenile training is autobiographical: "I was forbid much," he says; "wishes in any way bold I had to renounce: everywhere a strait bond of obedience held me down. Thus already free-will often came in painful collision with necessity, so that my tears flowed, and at seasons the child itself might taste that root of bitterness wherewith the whole fruitage of our life is tempered and mingled."

Young Thomas was a studious, retiring boy, who shunned the rude sports of his companions, and found his highest satisfaction in listening with reverent attention to the conversation of his seniors. Unlike his ancestors—for his father and his four brothers were known by the significant title of the "fighting masons of Ecclefechan"—he showed no pugilistic talents, and shunned bodily combats. After receiving some preparatory training from the parish schoolmaster of Ecclefechan, a "down-bent, broken-hearted, underfoot martyr," Thomas, having shown such signs of ability as to appear deserving of a better education than ordinary, was entered at the Annan Academy, when little more than seven years old. There he remained for over seven years—years, as we may learn from "Sartor Resartus," of much bitterness and sorrow; for the headmaster, Adam Hope, was, after the old brutal fashion, a strict disciplinarian. It has been

stated that it was at this time that Carlyle formed his first acquaintance with Edward Irving; but this is an error.*

In 1810, having not quite completed his fifteenth year, Carlyle entered the University of Edinburgh. Full of hunger for spiritual food, he asked bread from the professors there, and they gave him a stone. "The University where I was educated," he says in 'Sartor,' "still stands vivid enough in my remembrance, and I know its name well; which name, however, I, from tenderness to existing interests and persons, shall in nowise divulge. It is my painful duty to say that out of England and Spain ours was the worst of all hitherto discovered Universities. This is indeed a time when right education is, as nearly as may be, impossible: however, in degrees of wrongness, there is no limit; nay, I can conceive a worse system than that of the nameless itself; as poisoned victual may be worse than absolute hunger." In a similar spirit we find Carlyle writing to Macvey Napier in 1831, *apropos* of Sir William Hamilton's paper on Oxford in the *Edinburgh Review*: "It is a subject that cries aloud for rectification. The English Universities, and indeed the British, are a scandal to this century."

When one reads over Carlyle's bitter and scornful account of the "University where I was educated," one is apt to think, Surely the professors of Edinburgh University in 1810 must have been men

* See "Some Reminiscences of Carlyle" in *London Weekly Review*, Feb. 12, 1881.

of very despicable abilities. But when one comes to investigate the matter, it is found that this was by no means the case. Dunbar, the professor of Greek, though, perhaps, a bit of a literary quack, was no contemptible scholar; while the names of Leslie, professor of mathematics, Playfair, professor of natural philosophy, and Thomas Brown, professor of logic and moral philosophy, are still remembered and honoured. But it may be questioned if any professors, of whatever ability and attainments, could have exercised a very deep influence over a youth of so striking a genius, and so original a temperament as Carlyle. Mathematics, during his college career, and for some time after, was his favourite study, and he prosecuted it with so much ardour as to impair his health, and lay the foundation of that dyspepsia which tormented him throughout life. But the most valuable part of the education which Carlyle received at this time was that for which he was not indebted to any professor. Fabulous stories are told of the prodigious number of books he took out of the University Library. "From the chaos of that library," writes Diogenes Teufelsdröckh, "I succeeded in fishing up more books than had perhaps been known to the keepers thereof. The foundation of a literary life was thereby laid."

Carlyle left the University, in May 1814, without taking a degree. Soon after he obtained the teachership of mathematics in the burgh school of Annan, where, as has been related, he had himself been a scholar. Here he remained for two years,

when he was offered the teachership of mathematics and classics in the burgh school of Kirkcaldy. At Kirkcaldy, he became acquainted with Irving, then master of a "venture school" there, an intimacy soon cemented into deep friendship. Carlyle taught at Kirkcaldy for two years, and is said to have been, like Irving, a stern disciplinarian. Alexander Smith, in the *Argosy* for May 1866, states that he was chased out of the "lang toun" by the indignant mothers of the children under his charge, his severity having grown so intolerable. This anecdote may be taken for what it is worth. We suspect that, like a great many other anecdotes about Carlyle, it is worth nothing at all.

On leaving Kirkcaldy, Carlyle returned to Edinburgh, with apparently no very definite prospects.* Milburn, the American blind preacher, whose information is not always very trustworthy, relates that he once said to Carlyle: "You seem to be a martyr to dyspepsia. How does it come? Did you inherit it, or have you acquired it?" To which Carlyle, evidently referring to his mental struggles at the period of which we are now treating, made reply:—

"I am sure I can hardly tell, sir. I only know that, for one or two or three and twenty years of my mortal existence, I was not conscious of the

* While engaged as a schoolmaster he is said to have taken three "partial sessions" in divinity at Edinburgh University. We are enabled to state, on good authority, that he was the author of at least one sermon, the MS. of which was in existence a few years ago, and perhaps still exists.

ownership of that diabolical arrangement called a stomach. I had grown up the healthy and hardy son of a healthy and hardy Scotch dalesman; and he was the descendant of a long line of such: men that had tilled their paternal acres, and gained their three-score year and ten, or even mayhap, by means of strength, their four-score years—and had gone down to their graves, never a man of them the wiser for the possession of this infernal apparatus.

“And the voice came to me saying, ‘Arise, and settle the problem of thy life.’ And so I entered into my chamber and closed the door, and around me there came a trooping throng of phantasms dire from the abysmal depths of nethermost perdition. Doubt, fear, unbelief, mockery, and scorn were there; and I arose, and wrestled with them in travail and agony of spirit. Whether I ate I know not; whether I slept I know not; I only know that, when I came forth again, it was with the direful persuasion that I was the miserable owner of a diabolical arrangement called a stomach; and I have never been free from that knowledge from that day to this, and I suppose that I never shall be until I be laid away in my grave.”

Carlyle appears at first to have met with but little encouragement in Edinburgh, for, in 1819, we find Edward Irving writing of him: “Carlyle is going away. It is very odd, indeed, that he should be sent, for want of employment, to the country. Of course, like every man of talent, he has gathered around this Patmos many a splendid purpose to be fulfilled, and much improvement to be wrought out.

He says : 'I have the ends of my thoughts to bring together, which no man can do in this thoughtless scene. I have my views of life to reform, and the whole plan of my conduct to remodel ; withal I have my health to recover ; and then once more I shall venture my bark upon the waters of this wide realm, and, if she cannot weather it, I shall steer west, and try the waters of another world.' So he reasons and reasons, but sure a worthier destiny awaits him than voluntary exile."

A worthier destiny did await him, though, like most young writers, he had to struggle for a while with mere literary drudgery unworthy of a man of his powers. A work frequently to be found at second-hand bookstalls is "The Edinburgh Encyclopædia," in eighteen large quarto volumes. The curious reader who examines it will find that its publication extended from 1809 to 1830 ; that it was edited by Sir (then Mr) David Brewster, who characteristically adorned the title-page with twenty lines enumerating his titles at full length ; and that the greater part of its contents is utterly worthless—as, indeed, the low price commonly put on it by the bibliopole would sufficiently show. On closer examination, he will, however, perceive that this voluminous work affords an illustration of Pliny's tolerant maxim, that there is no book so bad but that something of value may be found in it. On turning to the index, it will be found that no fewer than sixteen articles—namely, those on Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Montaigne, Montesquieu, Montfauçon, Dr Moore, Sir John Moore, Necker,

Nelson, 'Netherlands, Newfoundland, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Northumberland, Mungo Park, Lord Chatham, William Pitt—were contributed by "Thomas Carlyle, Esq." These contributions Carlyle did not think worthy of a place in his collected works; nevertheless to admirers of the Seer of Chelsea, they are full of interest. They are contained in volumes XIV.-XVI., which appeared in 1820-1823, during which time Carlyle was trying to make his way as a literary man by doing honest journey-work in default of better. Though not specially characteristic, and containing very faint traces of these peculiarities of diction with which all readers of Carlyle are so familiar, the articles bear clear evidence of ability, and contain passages quite above the reach of a mere servile mechanic of the pen. Two things will at once strike anyone who looks at the list of them given above—first, the extraordinary range of topics, and, secondly, the fact that while French subjects are discussed, German ones are conspicuous by their absence. The latter peculiarity may be accounted for by supposing that, as German literature was then very little studied in England, articles on subjects connected with it would not have been suited to the "Encyclopædia." That, even at this early period, Carlyle's attention had been turned to the great German writers is clear from his having in 1822 contributed a paper on Goethe's Faust to the "New Edinburgh Magazine."*

* To it he also contributed in 1821 a paper on Joanna Baillie's "Metrical Legends."

with what earnest and unremitting industry Carlyle must have laboured in his earlier years. All the articles are carefully written, and shew competent knowledge. The biographical papers are remarkable for the honesty and impartiality with which the various characters are estimated; while the topographical ones are models of lucid description.

We may imagine that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was not a subject of Carlyle's own choosing; nevertheless, he does her full justice. "Though," he says, "the general diffusion of knowledge within the last century has rendered it common for females to write with elegance and skill upon far higher subjects, Lady Mary deserves to be remembered as the first Englishwoman who combined a knowledge of classical and modern literature with a penetrating judgment and correct taste." On the famous quarrel between Pope and her ladyship his observations are very sensible. "Much," he remarks, "has been said of the malignity displayed by Pope in this attack, and of the meanness with which he attempted to recede from it. Certainly the accusations brought against Sappho are of a character sufficiently black, and the author's equivocal statements about their application seem to argue considerable weakness of mind; but if, without investigating how far such accusations might be founded on truth, we condemn the man, who, under the mask of a moralist, stoops to gratify his individual hatred, we are compelled at the same time to admit, that his antagonists appear to have wanted the power rather than

the will to be equally barbarous. It is a matter of regret that the friendship of Pope and Lady Mary was converted into enmity; but the means adopted by the one party to satisfy that enmity were hardly less blameable than those adopted by the other. A fierce, though dull, execration of Pope's malice and deformity, is but awkwardly blended with censures of his virulence and coarseness." The stiff, formal, correct style, occasionally bearing a considerable resemblance to Johnson's, in which Carlyle wrote at this time, appears strange when one thinks of the wild trumpet notes, whereby some twelve years afterwards Diogenes Teufelsdröckh made the hair of verbal precisians stand on end.

In the *Encyclopædia* articles, he writes as one who is not yet thoroughly master of his instrument—who has not yet attained sufficient self-confidence to break through ordinary rules, and be a law unto himself. Even in the famous *Essay on Burns*, a careful reader will perceive that the style is occasionally rather stiff and restrained. To find out the style which best accorded with his own individuality seems to have been a matter of no small difficulty to Carlyle. In this respect as in so many others, he presents a striking contrast to Macaulay, whose earliest writings contain all the salient peculiarities of his style as markedly as his latest.

Of Montesquieu Carlyle gives a very eulogistic estimate. Of the "*Esprit des Lois*" he says, "The abundance of curious, and generally authentic information with which the work is sprinkled renders

it instructive even to a superficial reader ; while the vigorous and original ideas to be found in every page of it, by an attentive one, never fail to delight and astonish where they convince, and to improve even when the truth of them seems doubtful. The brilliant hints, correct or otherwise, which the author scatters round him with a liberal hand, have excited or assisted the speculations of others in almost every department of political economy ; and Montesquieu is deservedly mentioned as a principal founder of that important science." From this we may gather that Carlyle held the "dismal science" in more honour in his youth than he afterwards did. He afterwards goes on to remark, that whatever blemishes the "*Esprit des Lois*" may have, "it is entitled to the high praise of steadily supporting the cause of justice and humanity, without departing from the moderation and reserve proper in combating established opinions." It seems very doubtful if Carlyle, in the maturity of his literary manhood, attached the same importance to "moderation and reserve in combating established prejudices," as he does here.

Montesquieu's style is said to abound in vivid and happy turns of expression, reminding us of his countryman Montaigne. The sketch of the latter is one of the most interesting of Carlyle's contributions to the "*Encyclopædia*." Mr Lowell, in his *Essay on Carlyle*, has remarked that there is not a word said in it as to his religious scepticism ; the character is looked at purely from its

human and literary side. "A modern reader," says Carlyle, "will not easily cavil at the patient and good-natured, though exuberant, egotism, which brings back to our view 'the form and pressure' of a time long past. The habits and humours, the mode of thinking and acting which characterised a Gascon gentleman in the sixteenth century, cannot fail to amuse an inquirer of the nineteenth; while the faithful delineation of human feelings in all their strength and weakness, will serve as a mirror to every mind capable of self-examination." Mr Lowell, commenting on the above extract, remarks that we find here no uncertain indication of that eye for the moral picturesque, and that sympathetic appreciation of character, which, within the next few years, were to make Carlyle the first in insight of English critics and the most vivid of English historians. While cordially recognising Montaigne's merits, Carlyle does not pass over his faults. "But if," he says, "details, otherwise frivolous, are pardoned because of the antique charm which is about them, no excuse, or even apology, of a satisfactory kind can be devised for the gross indelicacy which frequently deforms these Essays; and as Montaigne, by an abundant store of bold ideas, and a deep insight into the principles of our common nature, deserves to be ranked high among the great men of his own original age, he also deserves the bad pre-eminence in love at once of coarseness and obscenity."

Of Montfauçon only a brief notice is given.

"Of an author," it is said, "who has left forty-four volumes folio, it may be expected that elegance will not be a characteristic; and, accordingly, Montfauçon's writings are blamed for their cumbersome style and defective arrangement; but his erudition, a quality more befitting such pursuits, has never been called in question; and his works are still looked up to as guides through that obscure and intricate department of knowledge which he devoted his life to study."

Few of even the most inveterate novel readers of this generation have heard of "*Zeluco*," by Dr John Moore. Two generations ago, however, it made a great sensation, and it retained its popularity for many years. "Its strong delineations of character and passion," says Carlyle, "its scenes of pathos and pleasantry, redeemed the occasional exaggeration and hardness of this work, and gave to it a more lasting existence than generally falls to the lot of similar productions." Some may perhaps be induced to turn to it by reading Carlyle's general estimate of Moore as a novelist. "He showed no extraordinary felicity in the department of invention, no great power of diversifying his characters, or even in conducting his narrative. The main quality of his works is that peculiar species of sardonic wit, with which they are indeed profusely tinged, but which frequently confers a grace and poignancy on the general strain of good sense and judicious observation that pervades the whole of them." Of Moore's celebrated son, Sir John Moore, a meagre and inadequate account is

given. It contains nothing calling for particular notice.

The biography of Necker has not a few interesting features. "With a fate common to all," we read, "who have lived in times of political agitation, and thus blended the memory of their actions with that of events, which give force and expression to every fierce quality of human nature, Necker has been painted in the brightest and the blackest of colours, as the varying prejudices of historians have chanced to sway them. By one party he is reproached as the author of the French Revolution, and charged with all its horrors; by another he is eulogized as the virtuous and enlightened statesman, by whose guidance, too little appreciated, and lost in factious clamour at the time, all the advantages of a reform might have been secured without any of its evils. His character, we may safely assert, has been greatly exaggerated in both cases. The French Revolution might be accelerated or retarded, it could not be prevented or produced by any such circumstance as the conduct of Necker; and if his measures gave form and occasion to the troubles which followed, who can *yet* say under what different management the issue would have been milder or more salutary? By the candid of foreign nations Necker is now considered as a minister possessed of talents entitling him to an elevated place among politicians, and of integrity deserving perhaps to set him at their head. His talents, doubtless, were exercised when their exercise was too powerless to be of any

benefit; but the high moral rectitude of his deportment, preceded, followed, surrounded as it is by perfidy and cruelty and baseness, forms a bright spot, on which the mind gladly reposes amid the general gloom." This differs considerably from the half-contemptuous estimate of Necker implied in various passages in the "French Revolution." "He possessed banker's skill, banker's honesty, *credit* of all kinds, for he had written academic prize essays, struggled for India companies, given dinners to philosophers, and 'realised a fortune in twenty years.' He possessed further, a taciturnity and solemnity, of depth, or else of dullness. . . . In Necker's head, too, there is a whole pacific French Revolution, of its kind; and that taciturn dull depth, or deep dullness, ambition enough." * Necker is not the only revolutionary hero about whom Carlyle's opinion altered considerably upon more careful study. Of Mirabeau, "world-compeller, man-ruling deputy of Aix," we read in the article before us, "With equal ingenuity, keener ardour, and superior eloquence Mirabeau confronted him (Necker) like his evil genius; and being totally without scruple in the employment of any expedient, honest or the contrary, was but too successful in overturning all reasonable proposals, and conducting the people to that state of anarchy, out of which his own ambition was to be gratified and his own exertions rewarded."

Of Necker as an author it is said that "He displays much irregular force of imagination, united

* "French Revolution," Book ii. Chap. 5.

with considerable perspicuity and compass of thought, though his speculations are deformed by an undue attachment to certain leading ideas, which, harmonizing with his habit of mind, had acquired an excessive preponderance in the course of his long and uncontroverted meditations. He possessed extensive knowledge, and his works bespeak a philosophical spirit; but their great and characteristic excellence proceeds from that glow of fresh and youthful admiration for everything that is amiable or august in the character of men, which in Necker's heart survived all the blighting vicissitudes it had passed through, combining in a singular union the fervour of the stripling with the experience of the sage."

In describing Nelson Mr Carlyle rises to a strain of encomium high enough to satisfy even the greatest admirers of England's great naval hero. "In estimating the character of Nelson," he says, "a defective judgment would be formed were he viewed only as a great captain. Whoever inspects his history minutely will find in it traces of a spirit possessing a higher and more general species of excellence. His mind, it is true, was not unfolded by personal education, or by intercourse with cultivated men; his understanding turned almost exclusively on naval tactics; his enthusiasm was bent towards the attainment of naval honour; his sense of rectitude embodied itself in a feeling of loyalty to the king of England, and of hatred to all Frenchmen. Yet the high powers of genius existed in him, less palpably indeed, but not less

certainly, for being obscured and distorted by his professional habits. The quick intellect was there, the fervid imagination, the keen susceptibility nourished by it, and contributing to impart that force of will which nothing could oppose. As a necessary consequence, there was also the restless inquietude which great objects alone, and these but for a time, could satisfy or assuage. Now and then this latter peculiarity might be unpleasantly manifested: in vulgar natures it would have been named discontent; but with him it was the impulse to generous feeling and daring enterprise.

"Melancholy experience has never ceased to show that great warlike talents, like great talents of any kind, may be united with a coarse and ignoble heart. [Carlyle quite altered his opinion on this point. In all his later writings a very different doctrine is preached. "Human intellect, if you consider it well, is the exact summary of human worth." "A man of intellect, of real and not sham intellect, is, by the nature of him, likewise inevitably a man of nobleness." Sentences like these are of frequent occurrence.] But in Nelson, the sterner qualities of a conqueror were embellished by all that is elevated in a sense of honour, and tempered by all that is soft and romantic in human affections. Time has abated the first glow of our admiration of his exploits; exploits of a more exciting character have occupied men's thoughts, and cast his glories partially into the shade; the period is advancing when the naval superiority which he completed will pass

away ; but Nelson's name will always occupy a section in the history of the world, and be pronounced wherever it is understood as that of a HERO."

The topographical articles do not contain much that need detain us long. They are, for the most part, sober and sensible pieces of work, sometimes even powerfully written, and sometimes also, it must be confessed, not a little wearisome. Carlyle's style was at this time very slightly lighted up by that colour and freshness which, later on, enabled him to make even the driest details so interesting. Like all young writers who are unconscious of their own strength, he seems to have been afraid of giving offence by obtrusive originality either in form or matter. The article "Netherlands" is the longest of Carlyle's contributions to the *Encyclopædia*, extending to eleven pages. Besides a description of the country, a rapid summary of the history is given. The style is occasionally rather heavy, owing to the length of the sentences, many of which resemble the following in structure :—
"The Swiss and German soldiers of Charles were often Protestants : the nobles of the country were accustomed to study in the academies of Geneva : refugees from France and England were allowed by the freedom of the Low Countries to escape from the pressure of domestic persecution ; their mechanical skill or commercial capital was welcomed as a benefit ; and their opinions were listened to with toleration or approval by people in whom an intercourse with remote and dissimilar nations

had softened the asperities of bigotry,—in whom the long possession of wealth and social comforts had developed a spirit of inquiry and comparison, while their trading prejudices, their exclusive respect for diligence, and their love of gain, were shocked at the expensive *unproductive* establishment—the lazy monks and haughty prelates—of a hierarchy, whose gorgeous splendours suggested no idea but that of useless cost to their calculating and unimaginative minds.” It is but fair to say that sentences so cumbersome as this are of very rare occurrence. The article on Newfoundland is notable as containing one of those satirical sentences so copiously spread over Mr Carlyle’s later writings. “Their mode of proceeding,” [in whale-fishing], he writes, “is thus described by Mr Anspach, a clerical person, who lived in the island several years, and has since written a meagre and very confused book, which he calls a *history* of it.” The articles “Norfolk,” “Northamptonshire,” “Northumberland,” are comparatively brief, amounting in the aggregate to about ten pages.

The three other articles Carlyle contributed to the “Encyclopædia” are on Mungo Park, the Earl of Chatham, and William Pitt. Of Park, he says that he may be pointed to as one of the most unpretending and, at the same time, valuable specimens of humanity that embellished the age and country in which he lived. Regarding his “Travels,” he writes, with great justice, that “It still continues one of the most popular works of its class; and the qualities both of its subject and manner well

deserve this pre-eminence. In perusing it we follow the traveller with a keen anxiety ; we participate in all his toils, and dangers, and hair-breadth escapes, portrayed with a brief and touching simplicity, which at once awakens our sympathy by its indubitable air of truth ; we are instructed and entertained by his delineation of these vast countries, and the rude tribes which people them ; we admire his modest though unshaken fortitude ; we love the honesty and benevolent candour everywhere displayed by him. Many travellers have possessed more learning, more philosophy, and greater intellectual endowments ; but none has ever known better the secret of concentrating our attention and calling forth our esteem. It required not only extraordinary strength of mind to accomplish this undertaking ; no ordinary powers of fancy and judgment were also necessary to describe it so agreeably."

The character and abilities of the great Earl of Chatham are treated of in a strain of highflown panegyric. Of him on his first appearance in Parliament, it is said, that "His eloquence soon became the pride of his friends, and the terror of all that opposed him. A fine voice and figure prepossessed the hearers in his favour ; and the sentiments and opinions which he uttered bespoke a great and noble mind. There was in him a stern inexpiable contempt for meanness in whatever shape ; a fervid enthusiasm for the cause of freedom, for the honour of his country, for all good and worthy things ; the whole tempered and matured by a

strong commanding intellect, the force and justness of which might have seemed scarcely compatible with so much youthful ardour." "The chief lineaments of his character," we read at the conclusion of the article, "may be gathered from the most meagre chronicle of his actions. That he was a man of a splendid and impetuous genius—adapted for the duties of an orator by the vehemence of his feelings, and the rich gifts of his intellect; for the duties of a statesman, by his vastness of conception, his unwearied assiduity in ordering, his inflexible energy in execution—the highest and the humblest qualities that should combine to form a public man—may be learned from contemplating any portion of his public life. A survey of the whole will better show in how extraordinary a degree he possessed those requisites, and how richly he adorned them all by a truly noble style of sentiment, a rigid adherence to the great principles of honour and generosity, and every manly virtue. . . . He stands in the annals of Europe, 'an illustrious and venerable name,' admired by countrymen and strangers, by all to whom loftiness of moral principle and greatness of talent are objects of regard." A considerably higher estimate this than that given in the "Latter-Day Pamphlets,"* where it is said, "Illustrious Chatham, also not to speak of his Manilla ransoms and the like, did one thing; assisted Fritz of Prussia, a brave man and king (almost the only sovereign *king* I have known since Cromwell's time), like to be borne down by ignoble

* No. IV. "The New Downing Street."

men and sham kings ; for this, let illustrious Chatham too have a little money and human enthusiasm—a little, by no means much.”

Regarding William Pitt, Carlyle seems to have been in some doubt what opinion to form. “His merits as a public man,” he writes, “are yet matter of vehement discussion, and bid fair long to continue so. That he was a powerful speaker—unrivalled for the choice of his words, the lucid arrangement of his arguments—appears to be universally granted. That he was a skilful financier—distinguished for the sagacity of his plans and the diligence with which he reduced them to practice—appears also to be granted, though less universally. But with regard to the wisdom of his foreign and domestic policy, there is no unanimity of opinion even among those best qualified to judge him. . . . In this world of vicissitudes, it is not necessarily owing to unsoundness of moral principle that the opinions of our first age cease to be these of our last. Mr Pitt, in his twenty-fourth year, arrived at the highest station which a subject can hope for, without any violation of sincerity ; it was natural that he should look on the business of reform with very different eyes, when he viewed it as a minister and as a popular orator. . . . When the jarrings of Whig and Tory have given place to other causes of discord, as they succeeded others, a distant posterity will join the names of Pitt, and his rival Fox, to the names of the Chathams, the Oxenstierns, the Colberts, and other great statesmen of Europe ; it will be for the same posterity

to decide what rank they shall occupy in that august series—to trace with clearness the influence due to their actions, and assign to each the proper share of gratitude or blame.” By the time he published the “Latter-Day Pamphlets,” Carlyle had formed a definite judgment on Pitt. “But what am I to say of heaven-born Pitt, the son of Chatham! England sent forth her fleets and armies; her money into every country; money, as if the heaven-born Chancellor had got a Fortunatus’ purse; as if this island had become a volcanic fountain of gold, or new terrestrial sun capable of radiating more guineas. The result of all, which, what was it! Elderly men can remember the tar-barrels burnt for success, and thrice immortal victory in the business, and yet, what result had we! The French revolution, a Fact decreed in the Eternal Councils, could not be put down; the result was, that heaven-born Pitt had actually been fighting (as the old Hebrews would have said) against the Lord—that the Laws of Nature were stronger than Pitt. Of whom, therefore, there remains chiefly his unaccountable radiation of guineas, for the gratitude of posterity. Thank you for nothing—for eight hundred millions less than nothing.”*

While engaged in these literary labours he acted as tutor to Mr Charles Buller, to which office he was appointed in 1821. Of this connection, important to Carlyle in many ways, more will be said hereafter. In 1822 he (as appears from the date of

* “Latter-Day Pamphlets;” No. IV., “The New Downing Street.”

Sir David Brewster's preface to it, which is August 1822) executed a translation of Legendre's "Geometry."* It was not published till 1824. Carlyle's fondness for mathematical studies has been already adverted to. It is worth mentioning that, in Professor Leslie's "Elements of Geometry," published in 1817, we read, in connection with a certain demonstration, "The solution of this important problem, now inserted in the text, was suggested to me by an ingenious young mathematician, Mr Thomas Carlyle, formerly my pupil." To the translation of Legendre was prefixed an Essay on Proportion by Carlyle. In his "Budget of Paradoxes," De Morgan, a very competent authority, calls this, "a thoughtful and ingenious essay, as good a substitute for the fifth book of Euclid as could have been given in the space, and quite enough to show that he would have been a distinguished teacher and thinker on first principles; but he left the field immediately." It is not a little remarkable that Carlyle and Chalmers, two Scotchmen who have exercised a very wide influence over the minds of men in this century, and who have shown themselves endowed, in an ample measure, with the *perfervidum ingenium* said to be characteristic of their country, should have both in early life been distinguished as mathematicians.

In 1824 was issued at Edinburgh Carlyle's first notable work—his admirable translation of "Wilhelm Meister." It was published without the

* For this work, which was a complete failure in point of sale, he received £50—no mean sum in these days.

translator's name ; " a novel from the German of Goethe," is all the information regarding its origin which is given on the title-page. On the whole, the book was well received, with one conspicuous exception. In the pages of the *London Magazine*, De Quincey attacked Goethe and his translator in a criticism which may justly be pronounced utterly contemptible. This was one of the Opium Eater's many literary delinquencies, which it is difficult either to explain or excuse. Jeffrey, in the *Edinburgh Review*, on the other hand, spoke very favourably of the translator. " It is," he said, " a translation by a professed admirer ; and by one who is proved by his preface to be a person of talents, and by every part of the work to be no ordinary master, at least of one of the languages with which he has to deal." Jeffrey's criticism of the novel itself, which is sufficiently absurd, does not concern us here. It is well worth reading as an excellent specimen of honest, unblushing, Philistine criticism. But of all the criticisms of the translation the most laudatory, and the most just, was that which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine*. " Goethe has," it said, " for once, no reason to complain of his translator. The version is executed, so far as we have examined it, with perfect fidelity ; and, on the whole, in an easy, and even graceful style, very far superior, we must say, to what we have been much accustomed to in English translations from the Germans. The translator is, we understand, a young man in this city, and now for the first time appears before the public. We congratulate him on his very

promising *début*; and would fain hope to receive a series of really good translations from his hand. He has evidently a perfect knowledge of German; he already writes English better than is at all common, even at this time, and we know no exercise more likely to produce effects of permanent advantage upon a young mind of intellectual ambition, to say nothing of the very favourable reception which we are sure translations of such books so executed cannot fail to exercise on the public mind."

During 1823-24 Carlyle's "Life of Schiller" appeared by instalments in the *London Magazine*, a periodical which then boasted among its contributors De Quincey, Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, Allan Cunningham, and Thomas Hood. It is not a little singular that De Quincey's savage attack upon "Wilhelm Meister," and its translator, should have appeared in the very numbers containing the latter chapters of the "Life of Schiller." After being recast and enlarged, "Schiller" appeared in book form in 1825. It did not attract much attention, but what notice it did receive was favourable. The *Gentleman's Magazine* said of it that it was "A work far exceeding in execution all that it pretends to or promises, and in a style of eloquence and occasional loftiness worthy of its subject; an imperishable and original record of the finest genius which Germany has brought forth." A singular honour, which we can easily imagine Carlyle was extremely gratified by, awaited the little book to which, in 1845, he prefixed so apologetic a preface. A translation of it was published at Frankfort in

1830, to which was added a very laudatory preface by Goethe, then, as always, the god of Carlyle's idolatry. It is noteworthy, as marking the interest which the master took in his gifted disciple, to learn that Goethe was at the trouble of getting two drawings taken of the house at Craigenputtoch, where Carlyle resided after his marriage. "Thomas Carlyle's residence in Dumfriesshire, in the south of Scotland," forms the frontispiece to the volume, and there is also vignette of "the same in the distance."

In 1826 Carlyle married Miss Jane Welsh, the only child of Dr Welsh, a physician of some eminence in Dumfriesshire. By her father's side she was a lineal descendant of the famous Welsh of Ayr, whose heroic wife, the daughter of John Knox, "threatened sovereign Majesty that she would catch her husband's head in an apron rather than that he should lie and be a bishop." Carlyle is said to have had at one time an intention of writing Welsh's life. For his introduction to Miss Welsh he was probably indebted to his friend Irving, who had been her tutor. With her Carlyle acquired a moderate fortune, which relieved him from the necessity of labouring any longer at mere "journey work." Shortly after their marriage Carlyle and his wife set out for Germany, where his long-felt admiration of Goethe became deepened by personal acquaintance. Mrs Carlyle Goethe described as "beautiful and highly cultivated." Among his works are to be found several pretty copies of verses addressed by him to her.

From a passage in a letter of Carlyle's to John Wilson, written in 1829, we may infer that Carlyle's admiration for Goethe was equalled by his wife's. "My wife," he writes, "sends you her kindest regards, and still hopes against hope that she shall wear her Goethe brooch this Christmas, a thing only done when there is a man of genius in the company." We may conjecture that this "Goethe brooch" was a brooch containing a portrait of Goethe. Perhaps it is to this period of Carlyle's life that an anecdote in Lewes's "Life of Goethe" may be referred. "I heard a capital story of Carlyle at a dinner party at Berlin, silencing the cant about Goethe's want of religion by one of his characteristic sarcasms. For some time he sat quiet, but not patient, while certain pietists were throwing up their eyes and regretting that so great a genius! so god-like a genius! should not have more purely devoted himself to the service of Christian truth! and should have had so little, etc., etc. Carlyle sat grim, ominously silent, his hands impatiently twisting his napkin, until at last he broke silence, and in his slow emphatic way said, 'Mein Herren, did you never hear the story of that man who vilified the sun because it would not light his cigar?' This bombshell completely silenced the enemy's fire."

Carlyle's last piece of literary task-work was a series of translations entitled "German Romance: specimens of the chief authors; with biographical and critical notices." "This," he says in reprinting the introductions to the various specimens selected, "was a book of translations, not of my suggesting

or desiring, but of my executing as honest journey-work, in defect of better. The pieces selected were the suitablest discoverable on such terms; not quite of *less* than no worth (I considered) any piece of them; nor, alas, of a very high worth any, except one only. Four of these lots or quotas to the adventure, Musæus's, Tieck's, Richter's, Goethe's, will be given in the final stage of this series; the rest we willingly leave, afloat or stranded, as waste drift-wood, to those whom they may further concern." There is little in the various "Introductions" to call for comment or criticism. The preface to the series is noteworthy as containing more distinct and definite marks than any of his previous productions of that peculiar style afterwards identified with Carlyle's name.

With the publication of "German Romance," what may be called Carlyle's first period of literary activity comes to an end. Henceforth we shall have to trace him in greater and more ambitious undertakings. As will be seen in the ensuing chapter, his circle of literary acquaintances was rapidly becoming larger. But as yet he had attained no wide-spread reputation as an author; indeed it would be difficult to name a writer of equal genius who at the age of thirty-two had made so little impression on the world. In Germany his merits seem to have been better appreciated than in his own country. In Eckermann's "Conversations of Goethe," we read that when Goethe received in 1827 the famous letter Sir Walter Scott wrote to him, he said, "I almost wonder that Walter Scott

does not say a word about Carlyle, who has so decided a German tendency that he must certainly be known to him. It is admirable in Carlyle that in his judgment of our German authors he has especially in view the mental and moral core as that which is really influential. Carlyle is a moral force of great importance. There is in him much for the future, and we cannot foresee what he will produce and effect."

CRAIGENPUTTOCK.

CHAPTER II.

CRAIGENPUTTOCK.

IN 1828 Carlyle took up his residence at Craigenputtock, in Dumfriesshire, a small property belonging to his wife.* A letter of his to Goethe, dated September 25, 1828, gives a pleasing account of the place and of his manner of life there. It was printed by Goethe himself in his preface to the German translation of the "Life of Schiller," in 1830:—

'You enquire with such warm interest respecting our present abode and occupations, that I am obliged to say a few words about both while there is still room left. Dumfries is a pleasant town, containing about fifteen thousand inhabitants, and may be considered the centre of the trade and judicial system of a district which possesses some importance in the sphere of Scottish activity. Our residence is not in the town itself, but fifteen miles to the north-west of it, among the granite hills and the bleak morasses which stretch westward through Galloway almost to the Irish Sea. In this wilderness of heath and rock, our estate stands forth a green oasis, a tract of ploughed, partly enclosed

* In the "Return of Owners of Lands and Heritages (Scotland) 1872-3," Craigenputtock is entered as belonging to Thomas Carlyle, Chelsea. Its acreage is estimated as 773 acres, and its yearly value at £250.

and planted ground, where corn ripens and trees afford a shade, although surrounded by sea-mews and rough-wooled sheep. Here, with no small effort, have we built and furnished a neat, substantial dwelling ; here in the absence of a professorial* or other office, we live to cultivate literature according to our strength and in our own peculiar way. We wish a joyful growth to the roses and flowers of our garden ; we hope for health and peaceful thoughts to further our aims. The roses, indeed, are still in part to be planted, but they blossom already in anticipation. Two ponies, which carry us everywhere, and the mountain air, are the best medicines for weak nerves. This daily exercise, to which I am much devoted, is my only recreation ; for this nook of ours is the loneliest in Britain—six miles removed from any one likely to visit me. Here Rousseau would have been as happy as on his island of St Pierre. My town friends, indeed, ascribe my sojourn here to a similar disposition, and forebode me no good result. But I came hither solely with the design to simplify my way of life, and to secure the independence through which I could be enabled to live true to myself. This bit of earth is our own : here we can live, write, and think as best pleases ourselves, even though Zoilus himself were to be crowned the monarch of literature. Nor is the solitude of such great importance ; for a stage coach takes us speedily to Edinburgh, which we look upon as our British Weimar. And have I not,

* The word is significant. Carlyle is said to have been at one time a candidate for the Professorship of Astronomy in Glasgow University.

too, at this moment, piled upon the table of my little library a whole cart-load of French, German, American, and English journals and periodicals—whatever may be their worth. Of antiquarian studies, too, there is no lack. From some of our heights I can descry, about a day's journey to the west, the hill where Agricola and his Romans left a camp behind them. At the foot of it I was born, and there both father and mother still live to love me. And so one must let time work. But whither am I wandering? Let me confess to you, I am uncertain about my future literary activity, and would gladly learn your opinion respecting it; at least, pray write to me again, and speedily, that I may ever feel myself connected with you."

Before proceeding to describe Carlyle's literary labours at this time, we may quote an interesting letter of his to De Quincey, dated 11th December 1828. It will be found in Mr Page's *Life of De Quincey*. Apparently the "*Wilhelm Meister*" review had not prevented these two men of genius from forming a close intimacy with each other.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Having the opportunity of a frank, I cannot resist the temptation to send you a few lines, were it only to signify that two well-wishers of yours are still alive in these remote moors, and often thinking of you with the old friendly feelings. My wife encourages me in this innocent purpose; she has learned lately that you were inquiring for her of some female friend; nay, even promising to visit us here—a fact of the most interesting sort to both of us. I am to say, there-

fore, that your presence at this fireside will diffuse no ordinary gladness over all members of the household ; that our warmest welcome, and such solacements as even the desert does not refuse, are at any time and at all times in store for one we love so well. Neither is this expedition so impracticable. We lie but a short way out of your direct route to Westmoreland ; communicate by gravelled roads with Dumfries and other places in the habitable globe. Were you to warn us of your approach it might all be made easy enough. And then such a treat it would be to hear the sound of philosophy and literature in the hitherto quite savage wolds, where since the creation of the world no such music, scarcely even articulate speech, had been uttered or dreamed of ! Come, therefore, come and see us, for we often long after you. Nay, I can promise, too, that we are almost a unique sight in the British Empire ; such a quantity of German periodicals and mystic speculation embosomed in plain Scottish peat-moor, being nowhere else that I know of to be met with.

“ In idle hours we sometimes project founding a sort of colony here, to be called the ‘ Misanthropic Society,’ the settlers all to be men of a certain philosophic depth, and intensely sensible of the present state of literature ; each to have his own cottage, encircled with roses or thistles as he might prefer ; a library and pantry within, and huge stack of turf fuel without ; fenced off from his neighbours by fir woods, and when he pleased by cast-metal railing, so that each might feel himself strictly

an individual, and free as a son of the wilderness ; but the whole settlement to meet weekly over coffee, and there unite in their miserere, or, what were better, hurl forth their defiance, pity, expostulation, over the whole universe, civil, literary, and religious. I reckon this a much fitter site for such an establishment than your lake country—a region abounding in natural beauty, but blown on by coach-horns, betrodde by picturesque tourists, and otherwise exceedingly desecrated by too frequent resort ; whereas here, though still in communication with the manufacturing world, we have a solitude altogether Druidical—grim hills tenanted chiefly by the wild grouse, tarns and brooks that have soaked and slumbered unmolested since the Deluge of Noah, and nothing to disturb you with speech except Arcturus and Orion and the Spirit of Nature in the heaven and in the earth, as it manifests itself in love or anger, and utters its inexplicable tidings unheard by the mortal ear. But the misery is the almost total want of colonists. Would you come hither and be king over us ; then indeed we had made a fair beginning, and the ‘ Bog School ’ might snap its fingers at the ‘ Lake School ’ itself, and hope to be one day recognised of all men.

“ But enough of this fooling. Better were it to tell you in plain prose what little can be said of my own welfare, and inquire in the same dialect after yours. It will gratify you to learn that here, in the desert, as in the crowded city, I am moderately active and well ; better in health, not worse ; and though active only on a small scale, yet in my

own opinion honestly, and to as much result as has been usual with me at any time. We have horses to ride on, gardens to cultivate, tight walls and strong fires to defend us against winter ; books to read, paper to scribble on, and no man or thing, at least in this visible earth, to make us afraid ; for I reckon that so securely sequestered are we, not only would no Catholic Rebellion, but even no new Hengist or Horsa invasion, in anywise disturb our tranquillity. True, we have no society ; but who has, in the strict sense of that word ? I have never had very much worth speaking about since I came into this world ; in the next, it may be, they will order matters better. Meanwhile, if we have not the wheat in great quantity, we are nearly altogether free from the chaff, which often in this matter is highly annoying to weak nerves. My wife and I are busy learning Spanish ; far advanced in ‘Don Quixote’ already. I purpose writing mystical ‘Reviews’ for more than a twelvemonth to come ; have Greek to read and the whole universe to study (for I understand less and less of it) ; so that here, as elsewhere, I find that a man may ‘drie his weird’ (serve out his earthly apprenticeship) with reasonable composure and wait what the flight of years may bring him, little disappointed (unless he is a fool) if it bring him nothing save what he has already—a body and a soul—more cunning and costly treasures than all Golconda or Potosi could purchase for him. What would the vain worm, man, be at ? Has he not a head, to speak of nothing else—a head (be it with

a hat or without one) full of far richer things than Windsor Palace, or the Brighton Teapot added to it. What are all Dresden picture-galleries and *magazins des arts et des metiers* to the strange painting, and thrice wonderful and thrice precious workmanship that goes on under the cranium of a beggar? What can be added to him or taken from him by the hatred or the love of all men? The gray paper or the white silk paper in which the gold ingot is wrapped; the gold is inalienable; he is the gold. But truce also to this moralising. I had a thousand things to ask concerning you; your employments, purposes, sufferings, and pleasures. Will you not write to me? will you not come to me and tell? Believe it, you are well loved here, and none feels better than I what a spirit is for the present eclipsed in clouds. For the present it can only be; time and chance as for all men; that troublous season will end; and one day with more joyful, not deeper or true regard, I shall see you 'yourself again.' Meanwhile, pardon this intrusion; and write, if you have a vacant hour which you would fill with a good action. Mr Jeffrey is still anxious to know you; has he ever succeeded? We are not to be in Edinburgh, I believe, till spring; but I will send him a letter to you (with your permission) by the first conveyance. Remember me with best regards to Professor Wilson and Sir W. Hamilton, neither of whom must forget me; not omitting the honest Gordon, who I know will not. . . . With all friendly sentiments, I am ever, my dear Sir, most faithfully yours,

T. CARLYLE."

Mr Carlyle's earliest critical essays appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, then, under the energetic management of Jeffrey, undoubtedly the leading critical journal. We may gather from Carlyle's letters to Napier, Jeffrey's successor, how highly he estimated it. "I have already written in that *Review*," he says in one place,* "and should be very happy to write in it again; as indeed there can be no more respectable vehicle for any British man's speculations than it is and always has been." Again: "I have no hesitation, for my own part, in stating what is simply a literal historical fact, that there is no periodical now extant in Britain which I should so willingly write for, and publish *all* my Essayist lucubrations in, as the *Edinburgh Review*. If you really want me to preach in your pulpit, therefore, you have only to say so."† Jeffrey was an editor who exerted his prerogative to the full, and did not scruple to alter or add to contributions when he saw fit—a process not always very satisfactory to Carlyle. "My respected friend, your predecessor," he wrote to Napier, "had some difficulty with me in adjusting the respective prerogatives of author and editor, for though not, as I hope, insensible to fair reason, I need sometimes to rebel against what I reckoned mere authority, and this partly, perhaps, as a matter of literary conscience; being wont to write nothing without studying it if possible to the bottom, and writing always with an almost painful

* "Napier's Correspondence," p. 96.

† Do., p. 112.

feeling of scrupulosity, that light editorial hacking and hewing to right and left was in general nowise to my mind." *

Carlyle's first contributions to the *Edinburgh*—the essays on Richter and on the state of German literature—appeared in 1827. As German literature was then almost a *terra incognita* to English writers, it is probable Jeffrey was not sorry to enlist under his banner one so well qualified to speak on it with authority as Carlyle. These articles were followed, in 1828, by what many consider Carlyle's finest essay—that on Burns. Of it Carlyle wrote to Goethe—"The only piece of any importance that I have written since I came here is an Essay on Burns. Perhaps you never heard of him, and yet he was a man of the most decided genius; but born in the lowest walk of peasant life, and through the entanglements of his peculiar position was at last mournfully wrecked, so that what he effected is comparatively unimportant. He died in the middle of his career, in the year 1796. We English, especially we Scotch, love Burns more than any that has lived for centuries. I have often been struck by the fact that he was born a few months before Schiller, in the year 1759, and that neither of them ever heard the others' name. They shone like stars in opposite firmaments, or, if you will, the thick mist of earth intercepted the reciprocal light." In Charles Sumner's Correspondence there is a curious anecdote about this Essay. Sumner asked Jeffrey how he explained that Carlyle's fine article

on the life of Burns differed so much in style from his latter productions. "Oh," said Jeffrey, "because I altered it, and Carlyle was vexed at my interference." Jeffrey, no doubt, may have executed some "light editorial hacking and hewing" on the paper; but we suspect the real reason of the difference in style is simply this, that Carlyle, at the time when he wrote it, had not found out the mode of expression which suited him best, and so adhered more closely than afterwards to conventional canons.

To the *Foreign Review*, which entered on its short-lived existence in 1828, Carlyle was at this time a frequent contributor. His paper there on Goethe called forth the warm encomiums of the great German. "It is pleasant to see," he said, "how the earlier pedantry of the Scotch has changed into earnestness and profundity. When I recollect how the Edinburgh reviewers treated my works not many years since, and when I now consider Carlyle's merits with respect to German literature, I am astonished at the important step for the better. . . . The temper in which he works is always admirable. What an earnest man he is! and how he has studied us Germans! He is almost more at home in our literature than ourselves. At anyrate, we cannot vie with him in our researches in English literature." * In 1829 we find Carlyle writing to Goethe, "I have, with no slight contentment, reperused the 'Correspondence' (between Goethe and

* Eckermann's "Conversations of Goethe," p. 337. (Oxford's translation.)

Schiller), and despatched to-day an essay on Schiller for the *Foreign Review*, founded on it. It will be pleasant for you to hear that the knowledge and appreciation of foreign, and especially of German literature, is spreading with growing rapidity wherever the English language is spoken, so that, at the Antipodes, and even in New Holland, the sages of your land preach their wisdom. I heard lately, that even at Oxford and Cambridge, our two English Universities, which, till now, have been considered the stronghold of insular prejudices and inertia, there are symptoms of activity in these matters. At Cambridge, your Niebuhr has met with a skilful translator; and, at Oxford, two or three Germans find already sufficient employment as teachers of their language. The new light may be too strong for certain eyes; but no one can doubt the happy effects which will finally result from it. Let but nations, like individuals, know each other, and mutual hatred will be transformed into mutual helpfulness, and, instead of 'natural enemies,' as neighbouring countries have been sometimes called, we shall all be natural friends." Something prevented the insertion of the Essay on Schiller in the *Foreign Review*, and it appeared, in 1831, in *Fraser's Magazine*, Carlyle's connection with which began with its first number.

In 1829 Jeffrey resigned the editorship of the *Edinburgh Review*, and Macvey Napier was appointed his successor. On his writing to Carlyle requesting some contribution from him, Carlyle replied, in November 1830, suggesting two subjects

on which he was willing to write. "Occasionally of late," he says, "I have been meditating an Essay on Byron, which on appearance of Mr Moore's second volume, now soon expected, I should have no objection to attempt for you. Of Mr Moore himself I should say little, or rather, perhaps, as he may be a favourite of yours, nothing; neither would my opinion of Byron prove very heterodox; my chief aim would be to *see* him and show him, not as is too often the way (if I could help it), to write merely about him, and about him. For the rest, though no Whig in the strict sense, I have no disposition to run *amuck* against any set of men or of opinions; but only to put forth certain truths that I feel in me, with all sincerity, for some of which this Byron, if you liked it, were a fit enough channel. Dilletantism and mere toying with truth is, on the whole, a thing which I cannot practice; nevertheless, real love, real belief, is not inconsistent with tolerance of its opposite; nay, is the only thing consistent therewith—for your elegant *indifferente* is at heart only *idle*, selfish, and quite intolerant. At all events, one can and should ever *speak quietly*; loud hysterical vehemence, foaming, and hissing, least of all beseems him that is convinced, and not only *supposes* but *knows*.

"So much to cast some faint light for you on my plan of procedure, and what you have to look for in employing me. Let me only further request that if you, for whatever reason, do not like this proposal, you will without shadow of scruple tell me so. Frankness is best met by frankness; the practice presupposes the approval.

"I have been thinking sometimes, likewise, of a paper on Napoleon, a man whom, though handled to the extreme of triteness, it will be long years before we understand. Hitherto, in the English tongue, there is next to nothing that betokens insight into him, or even sincere belief of such, on the part of the writer. I should like to study the man with what heartiness I could, and form to myself some intelligible picture of him, both as a biographical and as a historical figure, in both of which senses he is our chief contemporary wonder, and, in some sort, the epitome of his age. This, however, were a task of far more difficulty than Byron, and perhaps not so promising at present." *

It is much to be regretted that neither of these designs was ever executed. In particular, an essay on Byron from Carlyle's pen would have been very valuable. In all probability, like his article on Burns, it would have put the previous criticisms of the poet utterly in the shade, and have greatly influenced the tone of all succeeding estimates of him. The main outlines of Carlyle's opinion of him are shown in his reply (April 28, 1832) to Napier's request that he should write a sketch of his life for the "Encyclopædia Britannica":—

"If it can gratify any wish of yours I shall very readily undertake that little piece on *Byron*, but it will be *tacento Minervâ*, without inward call; nor indeed am I sure that you have fixed on the right man for your object.

* Napier, p. 96.

“In my mind Byron has been sinking at an accelerated rate for the last ten years, and has now reached a very low level: I should say *too* low, were there not an *Hibernicism* involved in the expression. His fame has been very great, but I see not how it is to endure, neither does that make *him* great. No genuine productive thought was ever revealed by him to mankind; indeed, no clear undistorted vision into anything, or picture of anything, but all had a certain falsehood, a brawling, theatrical, insincere character. The man's moral nature, too, was bad; his demeanour as a man was bad. What was he, in short, but a large *sulky dandy*; of giant dimensions to be sure, yet still a dandy; who sulked, as poor Mrs Hunt expressed it, ‘like a schoolboy that had got a plain bun given him instead of a plum one.’ His bun was nevertheless God's universe, with what tasks are there; and it had served better men than he. I love him not; I owe him nothing; only pity and forgiveness; he taught me nothing that I had not again to forget.

“Of course one would not willingly propose to astonish or shock the general feeling of the world, least of all in a quiet dictionary of arts and sciences. Indeed I suppose nothing is wanted but a clear legible narrative with some little summing up and outline of a character, such as a deliberate man may, without disgrace, in after times be found to have written down in the year 1832. Whether you dare venture to have this spirit traceable in it I must now leave you to judge, adding only (if that

be necessary) that you *are* freely left ; that I can in no wise esteem it a slight or a disadvantage should you see good, as perhaps I might in your case, to employ some other hand." Apparently Napier did see good to employ some other hand ; at any rate the sketch was never written.

Along with his article on "Taylor's Historic Survey of German Poetry," his first contribution to the *Edinburgh* under Napier's management, Carlyle sent the following interesting letter, which we quote entire. It is dated "January 20, 1831":—

"MY DEAR SIR,—This paper on poor Taylor being finished I may as well send it off. I have studied to conform to your directions in one important point at least—in length ; though having been sore afflicted all the way with bad pens, I have written in irregular style, and know not quite accurately how much there is.

"And now I will pray that the next subject you give me may be an English one—at least no German one. On that last business I have said enough for a year or two, and innumerable men, women, and children have taken it up, who must see the surface clearly, and know that there *is* a depth, before you can help to show them *what* it is. I greatly approved of your friend Empson's* acknowledgement that 'Faust' was a wonderful poem and Lord Leveson Gower a windbag ; only he led him far too gently over the coals ; he

* Lord Leveson Gower's Poems and Translations.—*Edinburgh Review*, October 1830.

should have roasted him there, and made him not Leveson but a cinder. It is positively the nearest approach we can make to sacrilege in these days for a vain young man, not knowing his right hand from his left, to take an inspired work like this of Goethe's and mangle it into such an unspeakable hash. Let it be either overlooked or punished by *auto-da-fe*.

"I once proposed to Mr Jeffrey to make a sort of sally on *fashionable novels*, but he misunderstood me—thought I meant to *criticise* them : and so the matter dropped for the time. The Pelham-and-Devereux manufacture is a sort of thing which ought to be extinguished in British literature ; at least some one in the half century, a British reviewer, ought to rise up and declare it extinguishable, and prophesy its extinction. But I fear my zeal has somewhat cooled ; and perhaps the better method of attack were not to batter but to undermine. The English aristocracy have as much need of instruction as Swing himself.

"A far finer essay were a faithful, loving, and yet critical, and in part condemnatory delineation of Jeremy Bentham, and his place and working in this section of the world's history. Bentham will not be put down by logic, and should not be put down, for we need him greatly as a backwoodsman : neither can reconciliation be effected till the one party understands and is just to the other. Bentham is a denier (*sic*) : he denies with a loud and universally convincing voice : his fault is that he can *affirm* nothing, except that money is plea-

sant in the purse, and food in the stomach, and that by this simplest of all beliefs he can re-organize society. He can shatter it in pieces—no thanks to him, for its old fastenings are quite rotten—but he cannot re-organize it; this is work for quite others than he. Such an essay on Bentham, however, were a great task for anyone; for me a very great one, and perhaps rather out of my road.

“My brother speaks of preparing some little paper or other to submit to you. Should this take effect, I dare promise that you *will look* at the performance, and even report that it will not do, or that it will; but shall farther beg you to understand, with all distinctness, that you need stand on no ceremony; that I should never see the paper except in print; and above all, in matters of that kind can have no friend and no enemy. However, John’s resolutions are no decrees of fate: perhaps such a contingency may never arrive.

“Hoping to hear from you by and bye, I remain,
faithfully yours, THOMAS CARLYLE.”*

Apparently neither of the schemes mentioned in the foregoing letter met with Napier’s approval. Lord Lytton was at this time one of the contributors to the *Edinburgh*, and for this reason, as well as for others which it is not difficult to imagine, an exposure of the “Pelham and Devereux manufacture” could not very well have appeared in its pages. As for the essay on Bentham, we may suppose that Napier, to whom the editorial chair

* Napier, p. 101.

was far from a bed of roses, may have feared that its tone would be such as to offend alike the advocates of utilitarianism, and those, who, like Macaulay, opposed it on principles very different from Carlyle's. In the next letter we shall quote, the commencement appears to refer to negotiations connected with the publication of "*Sartor Resartus*." It is dated "London, September 5, 1831"—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I delivered your note to Mr Rees, from whom I experienced the most courteous reception ; but for the rest, found matters much as you represented them. The book-trade, everyone cries, is done ; the public has ceased to buy books ; which step, as I often answer, seems simply the wisest, in that respect, the public has taken since I knew it. 'Long enough,' the public hereby exclaims, 'have ye fed me on froth and coagulated water ; I will have some more solid nourishment, or starve.'

"In regard to my own small matters, it seems likely that I may still succeed in making some tolerable arrangement ; most probably with Mr Murray. Meanwhile, it has been settled that Mrs Carlyle is to come hither and join me, and we are to pass the winter in London. I am at present scheming out my occupation for the season ; and here, among the first items, I come upon an 'Essay on Luther,' which has lain in my head for several years ; which I at one time thought of making into a book, but now mean to set forth as a review article—reserving to myself the right to republish

it at some future time in a certain projected book of mine, where with much else of that sort it may find its fittest place. I apply to you in the first instance, to see whether such a thing would be suitable. The whole matter is still only like a chaos in my own head; but the materials are in my possession or within my reach, neither is the will wanting. Please, therefore, to let me know by your earliest convenience what you think of it; whether such an article would do, and, if so, when it would be wanted.—Faithfully yours,

“THOMAS CARLYLE.”*

The “projected book” probably was of the same nature as the “Lectures on Hero-Worship,” where Luther is eulogized. Napier’s reply was favourable; but he seems to have insisted on the necessity of keeping the article within due limits as to length. “I am much obliged,” writes Carlyle to him about a month after his previous letter, “by your kind and speedy reply about the paper on Luther. I can sympathise in your distresses, from author and from reader, in regard to the matter of length; both parties are somewhat unreasonable, and the editor, who must stand in the middle and sustain two fires, has no sinecure of it. Indeed, I think it is a thousand pities that writing has ever in any case come to be valued by its *length*; better even, if we must have a universal standard, that it were valued by its *shortness*; for prolixity in word, and still more in thought, may be defined as the

* Napier, p. 113.

characteristic of all bad writing ; not to know the essential from the unessential, is simply not to know the matter in hand, and therefore to delineate it falsely and ill. Poor authors, with booksellers for their Mecaenases ! Nay, the very weaver does not come and say, Here are so many yards of cloth I have woven ; but, here are so many yards of *such* cloth.

“ Six-and-thirty pages are a considerable space ; yet, I doubt whether so much would suffice me in this case. The thing I had in view was some picture of Martin Luther, and of his environment—*what* he was, and *how* he was ; a matter, as you observe, of perennial moment, and requiring, perhaps, to be reinterpreted and readapted to our new point of vision ; of great interest for me therefore, but, at the same time, of great compass and difficulty. At all events, it will be prudent to wait a little and reconsider it before starting.”*

Other subjects for articles submitted to Napier by Carlyle were Boswell's Johnson, and “ the state of authors at this epoch ; the duties, performances, and marvellous position of the author in our system of society ; matters which, as I believe, will one day force themselves on the universal attention.” Doubtless Carlyle's own difficulties with regard to the publication of “ Sartor ” made him consider the position of authors more desperate than facts warranted. Every writer, whether great or small, has a tendency to think “ the world in its dotage ” if his talents meet with no recognition ; and Carlyle,

* Napier, p. 115.

living in comparative neglect while mere "windbags" were being lauded to the skies, had better reason than most to feel how unjust popular applause often is, and how far popularity is from being a test of merit.

The letters of Carlyle which appear in "Napier's Correspondence" are remarkable in many ways. In the first place, to use John Sterling's words about two of Carlyle's letters to him, "Unlike other people's, they have the writer's signature in every word, as well as at the end." Then they are remarkable for the tone of unaffected modesty that pervades them; for the affectionate and trusting nature shown in every line; and for the transparent honesty and straightforwardness which were characteristic of Carlyle throughout life. Lastly, they show his wide range of reading and information; and bear witness, directly or indirectly, to the fact that most of the works he afterwards wrote had originated while he perfected his self-culture amid the bleak solitudes of Craigenputtock. In the letters few allusions are made to public affairs, if we except one or two references to the Reform Bill. "This," he writes from London, on October 8, 1831, "is the day when, as the most seem to calculate, the Lords are to *reject* the Reform Bill. London is perfectly quiet, and promises to continue so; the poor Lords can only accelerate (by, perhaps, a century) their own otherwise inevitable enough abolition, that is the worst they can do; the people and their purposes are no longer dependent on them." *

* Napier, p. 117.

The last letter of Carlyle's to Napier we shall quote, has reference to the famous "Characteristics" article. It is dated "London, December 17, 1831."

"MY DEAR SIR,—I have, barely within my time, finished that paper, to which you are heartily welcome, if you have room for it. The doctrines here set forth have mostly long been familiar convictions with me; yet it is, perhaps, only within the last twelvemonth that the public utterance of some of them could have seemed a duty. I have striven to express myself with what guardedness was possible; and, as there will now be no time for correcting proofs, I must leave it wholly in your editorial hands. Nay, should it, on due consideration, appear to you in your place (for I see that matter dimly, and nothing is clear but my own mind and the general condition of the world) unadvisable to print the paper at all, then pray understand, my dear sir, now and always, that I am no unreasonable man, but if dogmatic enough (as Jeffrey used to call it) in my own beliefs, also truly desirous to be just towards those of others. I shall, in all sincerity, beg of you to do, without fear of offence (for in *no* point of view will there be any), what you yourself see good. A mighty work lies before the writers of this time: I have a great faith and a great hope that the *Edinburgh Review* will not be wanting on its part, but stand forth in the van, where it has some right to be. But we shall get to understand these things better, and much else; for I hope to see you soon, and ask and answer to great lengths.

We purpose coming home by Edinburgh, perhaps in two months, perhaps much sooner. The book trade is still dead, or in a state of suspended animation. The aspect of *that* world fills me with shuddering admiration. I rather think I must even stick my own little book in my pocket, after all. I have various other things *in posse* to write for you, but shall forbear speaking of them till it can be done with readier organs than these. The Reform Bill sails with fair wind and full sea. May the Heavens grant but this one prayer, that we had done with it. I hope soon to hear of you; and am always faithfully yours,

T. CARLYLE.*

It would have been well for Napier's peace of mind had he refused the "Characteristics" article insertion in the *Edinburgh*. It appears to have excited considerable astonishment and repugnance in the breasts of many of the contributors. Macaulay wrote, "As to Carlyle, he might as well write in Irving's unknown tongue at once." "I fear Carlyle will not do," said Jeffrey, "that is, if you do not take the liberties and the pains with him that I did, by striking out freely, and writing in occasionally. The misfortune is, that he is very obstinate and, I am afraid, conceited, and unluckily in a place like this, he finds people enough to abet and applaud him, to intercept the operation of the otherwise infallible remedy of general avoidance and neglect. It is a great pity, for he is a man of genius and industry, and with the capacity of

* Napier, p. 118.

being an elegant and impressive writer." We have read, but cannot vouch for the truth of the anecdote, that Lord Brougham was so disgusted with the paper that he declared he would write no more in the *Edinburgh*, if "that man's" articles were suffered to appear there. It is worth mentioning that the *Sun* newspaper, with what Macaulay truly called "delicious absurdity," attributed the article to Brougham !

Carlyle's last article in the *Edinburgh Review* was the graceful criticism of the "Corn-Law Rhymes," which appeared in 1832. Why he ceased writing for it is not very clear. "Mr Carlyle formerly wrote for the *Edinburgh Review*," wrote Macaulay to Leigh Hunt, "a man of talents, though absurdly overpraised by some of his admirers. I believe, though I do not know that he ceased to write, because the oddities of his diction, and his new words, compounded *a la Teutonique*, drew such strong remonstrances from Napier." To the last, Macaulay could see very little to admire in Carlyle, and persistently refused to study his works. "Little as he was aware of it," writes Mr Trevelyan, "it was no slight privation that one who had by heart the battle of Marathon, as told by Herodotus, and the raising of the Siege of Syracuse, as told by Thucydides, should have passed through life without having felt the glow which Mr Carlyle's story of the charge across the ravine at Dunbar, could not fail to awaken even in a Jacobite ; that one who so keenly relished the exquisite trifling of Plato, should never have

tasted the exquisite description of Coleridge's talk in the 'Life of John Sterling'—a passage which yields to nothing of the same class in the 'Protagoras' or 'Symposium.'” It may be imagined that Carlyle found much in Macaulay's works that he was far from admiring; nevertheless he did full justice to his good qualities. Once, during a visit to Lord Ashburton's, he caught sight of Macaulay's face in unwonted repose as he was turning over the leaves of a book. “I noticed,” said he, “the homely Norse features that you find everywhere in the Western Isles, and I thought to myself, ‘Well, anyone can see that you are an honest, good sort of fellow, made out of oatmeal!’” Of Macaulay's paper on Mirabeau, he wrote to Napier, “Macaulay is always spirited and emphatic, worth reading even on a worn-out matter.”

We may here sum up the results of Carlyle's labours during his stay at Craigenputtock. To the *Edinburgh Review* he contributed seven articles (Richter, German Literature,* Burns, Signs of the Times, Historic Survey of German Poetry, Characteristics, Corn-Law Rhymes); to the *Foreign Review*, eight (Werner, Goethe's Helena, Goethe, Heyne, German Playwrights, Voltaire, Novalis, Richter): to *Fraser's Magazine*, eight (On History, Luther's Psalm, Schiller, Goethe's Portrait, Biography, Boswell's Johnson, On History Again, Count Cagliostro); to the *Foreign Quarterly Review*, three (Early German Literature, Goethe's Works,

* The papers on Richter and on German Literature were written previous to his removal to Craigenputtock.

Diderot); to the *Westminster Review*, one (The Nibelungen Lied); and to the *New Monthly Magazine*, one (Death of Goethe). To this long list must be added certain translations, and, as we shall afterwards see, "Sartor Resartus." It is noteworthy that only three of the Essays are estimates of British writers—those on Burns, Johnson, and the "Corn-Law Rhymes."

When Carlyle first appeared as a critic, the "Common Sense" school of criticism was in vogue, which dealt mainly with the outward form of a writer's work, and paid little heed to its inner meaning and purpose. Of this school Jeffrey was the leader, and Macaulay the last eminent representative. Its work, though superficial, was often acute and brilliant; frequently it broke literary butterflies on the wheel with eminent skill and severity; especially it did good service in demolishing quacks of various descriptions. With its faults and its merits, with its mingled superficiality and acuteness, it has passed almost wholly away. No writer of equal eminence would now employ his abilities in writing such a review as that by Macaulay of Robert Montgomery. In great part at least, the extinction of this school and the introduction of one which, though sometimes apt to darken knowledge by words, is infinitely more profound and far-sighted, must be attributed to Carlyle. His criticisms steer clear of two rocks on which many men of lesser talents have made shipwreck. In the first place, he never, as Macaulay often did, uses fine phrases merely for rhetorical effect, with-

out any regard to their real relevance to the subject in hand. In the second place, he is free from the great vice of modern criticism—the vice of pretending to see more deeply than the critic really sees—of hiding poverty of thought beneath a mass of transcendental jargon. However unjust we may occasionally feel Carlyle's criticism to be—and as regards Keats and Gray it is very unjust—it never degenerates into mere rhetoric, and it is never disfigured by fustian and magniloquence.

To fully appreciate his great services as a critic, we must transport ourselves back fifty years. When he commenced his labours German literature was rarely mentioned except to be laughed at, and the intellectual kings of that country were looked on by such men as Jeffrey as more deserving of ridicule than of serious consideration. The thick cloud of ignorance and prejudice which concealed their true dimensions from our view, Carlyle was the main agent in dispelling. Moreover, as Mr Lowell has said, he gave to Englishmen the first humanly possible likeness of Voltaire, Diderot, Mirabeau, and others, who had hitherto been measured by the usual British standard of their respect for the geognosy of Moses and the historic credibility of the Books of Chronicles. And though his criticisms of British authors were few, they were not unimportant. His estimates of Burns and Dr Johnson have coloured the views of all succeeding writers on these men, and have caused a great deal of criticism which had been listened to with reverent attention to be regarded with pitying contempt.

We may conclude this chapter by giving some personal descriptions of Carlyle at this period. While his home was fixed at Craigenputtock, he was a frequent visitor to London, and sometimes remained there for considerable periods. It must have been during one of those visits that he met Charles Lamb at a party at Coleridge's. The conversation, we are told by De Quincey in one of his "Autobiographic Sketches,"* turned upon the Mahomedan creed, theology and morals; in the course of which, some young man, introduced by Edward Irving, thought fit to pronounce a splendid declamatory eulogium upon Mahomet and all his doctrines. This, as a pleasing extravagance, had amused all present. Some hours after, when the party came to separate, this philo-Mahomedan missed his hat, upon which, while a general search for it was going on, Lamb, turning to the stranger, said—"Hat, sir! your hat. Don't you think you came in a turban?" We need be at no loss to identify the "young man introduced by Irving."

Another notice of Carlyle occurs in the diary of Henry Crabb Robinson, under date 1832. Robinson describes him as, "a deep-thinking German scholar, a character, and a singular compound. His voice and manner, and even the style of his conversation, are those of a religious zealot; and he keeps up that character in his declamations against the anti-religious. And yet, if not the God of his idolatry, he has, at least, a prophet and a priest of his church in Goethe, of whose wisdom he speaks like

* Published originally in "Tait's Magazine," 1838, p. 364.

an enthusiast. But for him, Carlyle says he should not now be alive. He owes everything to him. But, in strange union with such idolatry is his admiration of Buonaparte. Another object of his eulogy is Cobbet, whom he praises for his humanity and love of the poor! Singular and even whimsical combinations of love and reverence these!"

It must have been about the time of which we are now writing that George Gilfillan, who describes him under the name of "Mr Carter," met Carlyle at a dinner party at Jeffrey's, of which he gives an account in the "History of a Man." He then, Gilfillan writes, had the appearance of a man about thirty years of age; with dark locks approaching to a curl; cheek tinged with a healthy red; a brow broad, prominent, but rather low, not unlike that which painters give to Burns; eyes which, in a front view, said nothing, but which, when seen from the side, were seen rolling in fire;* the lips, which appeared as if perpetually *champing some invisible bit*; the whole aspect of the face being that of infinite restlessness, strongly restrained by self-control. His eyes and lips, when he spoke, seemed taking parts, and responding to each other in one wild tune. A jaw like that of a tiger formed the base of the head; and a form not tall, but commanding in its mediocrity, from an air of proud humility and half-stooping strength, finished off the whole. Carlyle's con-

* "The finest eyes, in every sense of the word, which I have ever seen in a man's head (and I have seen many fine ones), are those of Thomas Carlyle."—"Leigh Hunt's Autobiography," chap. xv.

versation, if Gilfillan's account may be trusted, was as likely to attract attention as his appearance. In a strange, wild, Annandale accent he commenced an harangue. The public, he said, had become a gigantic jackass; Literature a glittering lie; Science was groping aimlessly amidst the dry, dead clatter of the machinery by which it means the universe; Art wielding a feeble, watery pencil; History stumbling over dry bones, in a valley no longer of vision; Philosophy lisping and babbling exploded absurdities, mixed with new nonsense about the Infinite, the Absolute, and the Eternal; our Religion a great truth groaning its last; Truth, Justice, God, turned big, staring empty words, like the address on the sign, remaining after the house was abandoned, or like the envelope after the letter had been extracted, drifting down the wind. "And what men we have to meet the crisis! Sir Walter Scott, a toothless retailer of old wives' fables; Brougham, an eternal grinder of commonplace and pretentious noise, like a man playing on a hurdy-gurdy; Coleridge, talking in a maudlin sleep an infinite deal of nothing; Wordsworth, stooping to extract a spiritual catsup from mushrooms which were little better than toadstools; John Wilson, taken to presiding at Noctes, and painting haggises in flood; the bishops and clergy of all denominations combined to keep men in a state of pupilage, that *they* may be kept in port wine and roast beef; politicians full of cant, insincerity, and falsehood;—Peel, a plausible fox; John Wilson Croker, an unhangd hound; Lord John Russel, a turnspit of good pedigree;

Lord Melbourne, a monkey; 'these by thy gods, O Israel!' Others occupied in undertakings as absurd as to seek to suck the moon out of the sky; this windbag yelping for liberty to the negro, and that other for the improvement of prisons;—all sham and imposture together—a giant lie—which may soon go down in hell-fire."*

Of all the descriptions of Carlyle at this period, the most interesting is that of Emerson, who visited him in 1833. "I came from Glasgow to Dumfries, and being intent on delivering a letter which I had brought from Rome, enquired for Craigenputtoch. It was a farm in Nithsdale, in the parish of Dunscore, sixteen miles distant. No public coach passed near it, so I took a private carriage from the inn. I found the house amid desolate heathery hills, where the lonely scholar nourished his mighty heart. Carlyle was a man from his youth, an author who did not need to hide from his readers, and as absolute a man of the world, unknown and exiled on that hill-farm, as if holding on his own terms what is best in London. He was tall and gaunt, with a cliff-like brow, self-possessed, and holding his extraordinary powers of conversation in easy command; clinging to his northern accent with evident relish; full of lively anecdote, and with a streaming humour, which floated everything he

* Of Gilfillan's paper on Carlyle's "French Revolution" in the first "Gallery of Literary Portraits," Carlyle wrote to Thomas Aird, "It is a noble panegyric, a picture painted by a poet, which means with me a man of insight and of heart; decisive, sharp of outline, in lines borrowed from the sun. It is rare to find one's self so mirrored in a brother soul."

looked upon. His talk playfully exalting the familiar objects, put the companion at once into an acquaintance with his Lars and Lemurs, and it was very pleasant to learn what was predestined to be a pretty mythology. Few were the objects and lonely the man, not a person to speak to within sixteen miles, except the minister of Dunscore, so that books inevitably made his topics.

“He had names of his own for all the matters familiar to his discourse. *Blackwood's* was the ‘Sand Magazine;’ *Fraser's* nearer approach to possibility of life was the ‘Mud Magazine;’ a piece of road near by that marked some failed enterprise was the ‘grave of the last sixpence.’ When too much praise of any genius annoyed him, he professed hugely to admire the talent shown by his pig. He had spent much time and contrivance in confining the poor beast to one enclosure in his pen, but pig, by great strokes of judgment, had found out how to let a board down, and had foiled him. For all that, he still thought man the most plastic little fellow in the planet, and he liked Nero's death *Qualis artifex pereo* better than most history. He worships a man that will manifest any truth to him. At one time he had enquired and read a good deal about America. Landor's principle was mere rebellion, and *that* he feared was the American principle. The best thing he knew of that country was, that in it a man may have meal for his labour. He had read in Stewart's book, that when he inquired in a New York hotel for the boots, he had been shown across the street,

and had found Mungo in his own house dining on roast turkey.

"We talked of books. Plato he does not read, and he disparaged Socrates; and, when pressed, persisted in making Mirabeau a hero. Gibbon he called the splendid bridge from the old world to the new. His own reading had been multifarious. 'Tristram Shandy' was one of his first books after 'Robinson Crusoe,' and Robertson's 'America' an early favourite. Rousseau's 'Confessions' had discovered to him that he was not a dunce; and it was now ten years since he had learned German, by the advice of a man who told him he would find in that language what he wanted.

"He took despairing or satirical views of literature at this moment; recounted the incredible sums paid in one year by the great booksellers for puffing. Hence it comes that no newspapers are trusted now, no books are bought, and the booksellers are on the eve of bankruptcy.

"He still returned to English pauperism, the crowded country, the selfish abdication by public men of all that public persons should perform. 'Government should direct poor men what to do. Poor Irish folk come wandering over the moors. My dame makes it a rule to give to every son of Adam bread to eat, and supplies his wants to the next house. But here are thousands of acres which might give them all meat, and nobody to bid these poor Irish go to the moor and till it. They burned the stacks, and so found a way to force the rich people to attend to them.'

"We went out to walk over long hills, and looked at Criffel, then without his cap, and down into Wordsworth's country. There we sat down and talked of the immortality of the soul. It was not Carlyle's fault that we talked on that topic, for he had the natural disinclination of every nimble spirit to bruise itself against walls, and did not like to place himself where no step can be taken. But he was honest and true, and cognisant of the subtle links that bind ages together, and saw how every event affects all the future. 'Christ died on the tree; that built Dunscore Kirk yonder; that brought you and me together. Time has only a relative existence.'

"He was already turning his eyes towards London with a scholar's appreciation. London is the heart of the world, he said, wonderful only from the mass of human beings. He liked the huge machine. Each keeps its own round. The baker's boy brings muffins to the window at a fixed hour every day, and that is all the Londoner knows or wishes to know on the subject. But it turned out good men. He named certain individuals, especially one man of letters,* his friend, the best mind he knew, whom London had served well."†

With his interview with Emerson, Carlyle is said to have been greatly pleased. "He talked like an angel," said he. When his essays were published in England in 1841, he prefixed to them a characteristic preface. "The name of Ralph Waldo

* Probably Edward Irving.

† Emerson's "English Traits," chap. I.

Emerson," he writes, "is not entirely new in England; distinguished travellers bring us tidings of such a man; fractions of his writings have found their way into the hands of the curious here; fitful hints that there is, in New England some spiritual notability called Emerson, glide through reviews and magazines. Whether these hints were true or not, readers are now to judge for themselves a little better.

"Emerson's writings and speakings amount to something; and, yet hitherto, as it seems to me, this Emerson is perhaps far less notable for what he has spoken or done, than for the many things he has not spoken or forborne to do. With uncommon interest I have learned that this, and in such a never resting, locomotive country too, is one of these rare men who have withal the invaluable talent of sitting still! That an educated man, of good gifts and opportunities, after looking at the public arena, and even trying, not with ill success, what its tasks and its prizes might amount to, should retire for long years into rustic obscurity; and, amid the all-pervading clash of dollars, and loud chafferings of ambitions and promotions, should, quietly, with cheerful deliberateness, sit down to spend *his* life, not in mammon worship, or the hunt for reputation, influence, place, or any outward advantage whatsoever, this, when we get a notice of it, is a thing really worth noting."

LONDON.

CHAPTER III.

LONDON.

WE have seen in Emerson's narrative that in 1833 Carlyle was already turning his eyes towards London. In 1834 he removed there, and permanently fixed his residence at 5* Cheyne Row, Chelsea, which has since become identified with his name. "The Seer of Chelsea" is as familiar a designation to this generation as "the Glorious Dreamer of Highgate" was to the generation that is past. His house was an old fashioned building, built in the reign of Queen Anne, and having its attractions enhanced by a pleasant garden, many of the flowers in which, including primroses and heather that came all the way from Scotland, were planted by the hand of Mrs Carlyle. Among the neighbours with whom he was on terms of intimacy were Daniel Maclise, who painted his portrait, and Leigh Hunt, who found him one of the most obliging of his friends. With Leigh Hunt he had become acquainted two years before his removal to London, "It was on the 8th of February 1832," writes Mr Thornton Hunt, "that the writer of the essay named 'Characteristics' received, apparently from Mr Leigh Hunt, a volume entitled 'Christianism,' for which he begged to express his thanks. By

* Now 24.

the 20th of February Carlyle, then lodging in London, was inviting Leigh Hunt to tea, as the means of their first meeting ; and by the 20th of November Carlyle wrote from Dumfries urging Leigh Hunt to 'come hither and see us when you want to rusticate a month. Is that for ever impossible?' The philosopher afterwards came to live in the next street to his correspondent in Chelsea, and proved to be one of Leigh Hunt's kindest, most faithful, and most considerate friends.'

His new house Carlyle described in a letter to a distinguished friend and countryman, Sir William Hamilton. He and Hamilton had been for some time acquainted, and, as may be gathered from the reminiscences of him, he contributed to Hamilton's "Life." Carlyle had a warm admiration of his great talents and fine character. "He was finely social and human," he writes. "Honesty, frankness, friendly veracity, courageous trust in humanity, and in you, were charmingly visible. His talk was forcible, copious, discursive, careless rather than otherwise; and, on abstruse topics, I observed, was apt to become embroiled and revelly, much less perspicuous and elucidative, than with a little deliberation he could have made it." The letter runs as follows:—"We have broken up our old settlement, and, after tumult enough, formed a new one here, under the most opposite conditions. From the ever silent whinstones of Nithsdale to the mud-rattling pavements of Piccadilly there is but a step. I feel it the strangest transition, but one uses himself to all. Our upholsterers, with all their rubbish and clip-

pings, are at length handsomely swept out of doors. I have got my little book-press set up, my table fixed firm in its place, and sit here awaiting what time and I, in our questionable wrestle, shall make out between us. The house pleases us much ; it is in the remnant of genuine old Dutch-looking Chelsea ; looks out mainly into trees. We might see at half a mile's distance Bolingbroke's Battersea ; could shoot a gun into Smollett's old house (at this very time getting pulled down), where he wrote 'Count Fathom.' Don Saltero's Coffee-house still looks as brisk as in Steele's time ; Nell Gwynn's boudoir, still bearing her name, has become a gin-palace, not inappropriately ; in fine, Erasmus lodged with More in a spot not five hundred yards from this. We are encompassed with a cloud of witnesses, good, bad, indifferent."

Before Carlyle's removal to London, "Sartor Resartus" had begun to appear by instalments in *Fraser's Magazine*. *Fraser* was then a very different sort of magazine from the decorous periodical with which we are now acquainted, numbering among its contributors such bright spirits as Maginn, Lockhart, Galt, Allan Cunningham, and others of considerable reputation in the literary world of their day, but whose names are now almost forgotten. "Sartor" appeared in 1833-34, and many, it is said, were the complaints of the subscribers to *Fraser* against its insertion. However, *Fraser* the bookseller stood up manfully for the book, and would have it inserted. The *Sun* newspaper declared that it was what old Dennis

used to call "a heap of clotted nonsense," mixed however, here and there, with passages marked by thought and striking poetic vigour. "Why cannot the writer lay aside his pedantry, and write so as make himself generally intelligible." Kindlier criticisms, however, were not wanting, and many men of talent perceived that in these strange utterances a man of profound and striking genius was making himself heard. John Stuart Mill writes in his Autobiography, "On his showing me the manuscript of 'Sartor Resartus,' his best and greatest work, which he had then just finished, I made little of it; though when it came out two years afterwards in *Fraser's Magazine*, I read it with enthusiastic admiration and the keenest delight."*

"This questionable little book," Carlyle tells us, "was undoubtedly written among the mountain solitudes in 1831." From two passages in his letters to Napier, it appears that it did not find its way into *Fraser* till he had tried in vain to get it published in book-form. In 1831 he writes, "All manner of perplexities have occurred in the publishing of my poor book, which perplexities I could only cut asunder—not unloose: so the MS., like an unhappy ghost, still lingers on the wrong side of Styx. The Charon of Albemarle Street, durst not risk it, in its *sutilis cymba*, so it leaped ashore again. Better days are coming, and new trials will end more happily." In the beginning of 1832 he writes again, "I have given up the notion of hawking my little manuscript book about any

* Mill's Autobiography, p. 175.

further : for a long time it has lain quiet in its drawer, waiting for a better day. The bookselling trade seems on the verge of dissolution ; the force of puffing can go no farther, yet bankruptcy clamours at every door ; sad fate ! to serve the devil, and get no wages from *him* ! The poor Bookseller Guild, I often predict to myself, will ere long be found unfit for the strange part it now plays in our European world ; and give place to new and higher arrangements, of which the coming shadows are already visible.”*

From 1834 to 1837 Carlyle's sole contribution to periodical literature was his noble notice of the death of Edward Irving, which appeared in *Fraser* in 1835. In the same year he was introduced by John Mill to John Sterling, of whose connection with Carlyle more will be said further on. In May 1835 Sterling addressed to Carlyle a long letter of criticism on “Sartor Resartus.” “It turns,” says Carlyle, “on a poor book of mine called ‘Sartor Resartus;’ which was not then even a book, but was still hanging desolately under bibliopolic difficulties, now in its fourth or fifth year, on the wrong side of the river, as a mere aggregate of magazine articles ; having at last been slit into that form, and lately completed so, and put together into legibility.

* Napier, pp. 117 and 123. In the notes these passages are made to refer to the “French Revolution ;” but it is difficult to understand how the MS. of the “French Revolution” could be spoken of as a “little manuscript book ;” and, moreover, they agree exactly with what we otherwise know of “Sartor Resartus.”

I suppose Sterling had borrowed it of me. The adventurous hunter spirit which had started such a bemired *Auerochs*, or Urus of the German woods, and decided on chasing that as game, struck me not a little,—and the poor Wood-Ox, so bemired in the forests, took it as a compliment rather." Most of the letter—a very long one—is given in Carlyle's "Life of Sterling," part 2., chap. ii., and contains what appears to us, on the whole, the best criticism of "Sartor Resartus" that has ever appeared.

In January 1837 we find Carlyle writing to Thomas Aird: "The Unspeakable Book is fairly at press, thank Heaven! It will be worth little to most men, to all men, except to me, the incalculable worth of troubling me no more." The "unspeakable book" referred to is the "History of the French Revolution," which had not got thus far on its road to publication without great difficulty. In one of his conversations with Milburn, Carlyle related the following striking narrative:—

"A sad story enough, Sir; and one that always makes me shudder to think of. I had finished the second volume of the book called 'The French Revolution: a History;' and as it lay in manuscript, a friend desired that he might have the reading of it; and it was committed to his care. He professed himself greatly delighted with the perusal, and confided it to a friend of his own, who had some curiosity to see it as well. This person sat up, as he said, perusing it far into the hours of the morning; and at length recollecting himself, surprised at the flight of time, laid the manuscript

carelessly upon the library table, and hied to bed. There it lay, a loose heap of rubbish, fit only for the wastepaper basket or for the grate. So Betty, the housemaid, thought when she came to light the fire in the morning. Looking round for something suitable for her purpose, and finding nothing better than it, she thrust it into the grate, and applying the match, up the chimney with a spark and roar went 'The French Revolution,' thus ending in smoke and soot, as the great transaction itself did, more than a half century ago.

"At first they forbore to tell me the evil tidings, but at length I heard the dismal story, and I was as a man staggered by a heavy blow. Ah, Sir, it's terrible, when you have been struggling for months and years with dim confusion and wild anarchy; when all about you is weltering chaos and unbroken darkness; and you have at length gained some victory, and have built a highway that will bear the pressure of your own foot, and perhaps the feet of generations yet to come, and the morning has dawned, and you see some way at least into the realm of Limbo—suddenly to find that you are in the centre of pitchy darkness, in the whirl of commingling elements, and that chaos has come again.

"I was as a man beside myself, for there was scarcely a page of manuscript left. I sat down at the table and strove to collect my thoughts and to commence the work again. I filled page after page, but ran the pen over every line as the page was finished. Thus was it, Sir, for many a weary day, until at length, as I sat by the window, half-hearted

and dejected, my eye wandered over acres of roofs, and I saw a man standing upon a scaffold engaged in building a wall—the wall of a house. With his trowel he'd lay a great splash of mortar upon the last layer, and then brick after brick would be deposited upon this, striking each with the butt of his trowel as if to give it benediction and farewell, and all the while singing or whistling as blithe as a lark. And in my spleen I said within myself, 'Poor fool! how can'st thou be so merry under such a bile-spotted atmosphere as this, and everything rushing into the regions of the inane?'

"And then I bethought me, and I said to myself, 'Poor fool *thou* rather, that sittest here by the window whining and complaining! What if thy house of cards falls? Is the universe wrecked for that? The man yonder builds a house that shall be a home perhaps for generations. Men will be born in it, wedded in it, and buried from it; and the voice of weeping and of mirth shall be heard within its walls; and mayhap true valour, prudence, and faith shall be nursed by its hearthstone. Man! symbol of eternity imprisoned into time! it is not thy works, which are all mortal, infinitely little and the greatest no greater than the least, but only the spirit thou workest in which can have any worth or continuance! Up thou at thy work and be cheerful!'

"So I rose and washed my face, and felt that my head was anointed, and gave myself to relaxation—to what they call 'light literature.' I read nothing but novels for weeks. I was surrounded by heaps of rubbish and chaff. I read all the novels of that

person who was once a captain in the Royal Navy [Captain Marryat], and an extraordinary honour he must have been to it; the man that wrote stories about dogs that had their tails cut off, and about people in search of their fathers; and it seemed to me that of all the extraordinary dunces that had figured upon this planet, he must certainly bear the palm from every one save the readers of his books. And thus refreshed, I took heart of grace again, applied me to my work, and in course of time 'The French Revolution' got finished, as all things must sooner or later."

Such is Milburn's narrative. In essentials it is correct, but there are several mistakes in it, and we imagine Carlyle's utterances are a little "touched up." It was not the second volume but the first that was destroyed, and it was not to a male but to a female acquaintance that Carlyle's friend lent it. John Stuart Mill (who says in his autobiography that he once had a half-formed resolution of writing a history of the French Revolution, his collections for which were afterwards very useful to Carlyle) having received the MS. for perusal, lent it to Mrs Taylor, and while in her possession it was destroyed as related above. Mill, as was natural, felt the disaster very keenly, and Carlyle did everything in his power to console him, though he regarded it as a terrible blow. A writer in the *World*, some months ago, relates that while sitting one evening in the drawing-room of Cheyne Row, he and Carlyle were in conversation on general subjects, and he remarked, "I have heard that the MS. of the

French Revolution was destroyed by fire before going to the printer. Was that so?" "Ay, ay," replied Carlyle, "it was so." "What did you do under the circumstances?" "For three days and nights I could neither eat nor sleep, but was like a daft man." "And what did you do at last?" "Well, I just went into the country (here Carlyle burst into a loud fit of laughter); I did nothing for three months but read Marryat's novels." Then after a serious pause he remarked, "I sat down and wrote it all over again;" and in a melancholy tone he concluded, "I dinna think it's the same; I dinna think it's the same!"

To Carlyle the destruction of his manuscript must have been a greater calamity than it would have been to many writers, for he was far from composing with rapidity, and revised and corrected what he had written with the utmost care. Harriet Martineau tells us in her autobiography, that he was the terror of printers; "every word was altered and revise followed revise." In his habits of composition, he inured himself to that "hard, patient, slaving toil," which he constantly inculcates, working methodically and not by fits and starts. While composing the "French Revolution," he is known to have set himself to produce a stated quantity every day.

The "French Revolution" was the first work that bore Carlyle's name on the title-page. As may be supposed, it brought him more prominently into notice than any of his previous writings.* By

* It is the only work of Carlyle's that has been translated into French.

not a few it was read with a rapturous avidity. Sir William Hamilton is said to have sat up all night to finish it; and Walter Savage Landor hailed it as the best book published in his time, and recognised the advent of a new literary potentate. That his increased reputation was gratifying to Carlyle cannot be doubted. Harriet Martineau relates, that when she first knew him he had a shy manner, a rapidly changing colour; slept rarely, was wofully dyspeptic, variable in mood, and usually miserable. Allan Cunningham protested to her, that all that was needed to restore Carlyle's health was a "little more fame," and Miss Martineau observed afterwards, that as his reputation increased he grew better and better. Not that he cared much for fame in the vulgar sense of the word. Once upon a time, Harriet Martineau and a friend of hers finding that he was ordered weak brandy and water instead of wine, spent a few sovereigns in French brandy of the best sort, which they carried over to his house one evening when going to tea. Carlyle's amusement and delight at first, and all the evening after, whenever he turned his eyes towards the long necked bottles, showed them that they had made a good choice. He declared that he had got a reward for his labours at last; and his wife asked Miss Martineau to dinner, all by herself, to taste the brandy. As they sat round the fire after dinner, Carlyle mixed the toddy, while Mrs Carlyle and Harriet Martineau discussed some literary matters, and speculated on fame and the love of it. Then Carlyle held out a glass of his mixture to the latter

with, "Here, take this. It is worth all the fame in England."

But though by the "French Revolution," he had earned the approbation of many competent to judge, to the general public he was still almost unknown. Charles Sumner, who visited him in 1838, writes as follows—"Another morning was devoted to Carlyle. His manners and conversation are as unformed as his style; and yet, withal, full of genius. In conversation he piles thought upon thought, and imagining upon imagining, till the erection seems almost to topple down with its weight. He lives in great retirement—I fear almost in poverty. To him, London and its mighty maze of society are nothing, neither he nor his writings are known. Young Milnes (whose poems you have doubtless read) told me that nobody knew of his existence; though he, Milnes, entertained for him personally the greatest regard. Carlyle said, the strangest thing in the history of literature was his recent receipt of £50 from America on account of the "French Revolution," which had never yielded him a farthing, and probably never would. I am to meet Leigh Hunt at Carlyle's."

In 1838, "*Sartor Resartus*" at length appeared in book form. The Americans had already recognised the great originality and power of the book. In 1836, the scattered papers had been brought together by Mr Emerson, and published with a modest and semi-apologetic criticism. The editors did not expect for the little work any immediate popularity. "They will not undertake, as there is

no need, to justify the gay costume in which the author delights to express his thoughts, or the German idioms with which he has sportively sprinkled his pages. It is his humour to advance the gravest speculations upon the gravest topics in a quaint and burlesque style. If his masquerade offend any of his audience to that degree they will not hear what he has to say, it may chance to draw others to listen to his wisdom; and what work of imagination can hope to please all? But we will venture to remark, that the distaste excited by these peculiarities in some readers is greatest at first, and is soon forgotten; and that the foreign dress and aspect of the work are quite superficial, and cover a genuine Saxon heart. We believe no book has been published for many years, written in a more severe style of idiomatic English, or which discovers an equal mastery over all the riches of language. The author makes ample amends for the occasional eccentricity of his genius, not only by frequent bursts of pure splendour, but by the wit and sense which never fail him." The little work puzzled many critics in New England as well as in the old country. Alexander H. Everett, who noticed it in the *North American Review*, gravely argued the question whether it was really a synopsis and criticism of some German book; and, after a careful survey of the whole ground, came to the conclusion "that no such person as Professor Teufelsdröckh or Counsellor Heuschrecke ever existed; that the six paper bags, with their China-ink inscriptions and multi-

furious contents, are a mere figment of the brain; that the 'present editor' is the only person who has ever written upon the Philosophy of Clothes; and that the 'Sartor Resartus' is the only treatise that has yet appeared upon that subject; in short, that the whole account of the origin of the work before us, which the supposed editor relates with so much gravity, is, in plain English, a *hum*. The only thing about the work, tending to prove that it is what it purports to be, a commentary on a real German treatise, is the style, which is a sort of Babylonish dialect, not destitute, it is true, of richness, vigour, and, at times, a sort of singular felicity of expression, but very strongly tinged throughout with the peculiar idiom of the German language. This quality in the style, however, may be a mere result of a great familiarity with German literature; and we cannot, therefore, look upon it as in itself decisive, still less as outweighing much evidence of an opposite character." What notices we have seen of "Sartor," on its publication in book form in this country, were favourable. "These lucubrations," said *Tait's Magazine* for September 1838, "have puzzled both the Old and the New World. Editors and *Booksellers' Tasters* have been at a loss to know what to make of them, or even to determine whether the affair presented as a translation from the German was not what the English call a *hoax*, and the Yankees, a *hum*. The *North American Reviewer* has been nearly fairly bitten, though his rare sagacity finally discovered that Professor Teufelsdröckh is about as real a personage as

Tristram Shandy's father, Captain Gulliver, or Don Quixote. We can, no more than the English translator, promise the Professor's discursive, light, profound, quaint and humorous disquisitions a permanent popularity in England; but this we promise: those who taste him will not easily forget his race." Soon after the publication of "Sartor," and in the same year, Carlyle collected his scattered essays, and issued them under the title of "Miscellanies."

In 1837 Carlyle made his first appearance in a new and somewhat uncongenial character, by delivering a course of lectures on "German Literature" at Willis's Rooms. "This course of lectures," writes James Grant,* "was well attended by the fashionables of the West End, and though they saw in his manner something exceedingly awkward, they could not fail to discern in his matter the impress of a mind of great originality and superior gifts." The *Spectator* of May 6 thus noticed the first of the series—"Mr Carlyle delivered the first of a course of lectures on German literature, at Willis's Rooms, on Tuesday, to a very crowded and yet a select audience of both sexes. Mr Carlyle may be deficient in the mere mechanism of oratory; but this minor defect is far more than counter-balanced by his perfect mastery of his subject, the originality of his manner, the perspicuity of his language, his simple but genuine eloquence, and his vigorous grasp of a large and difficult question. No person of taste or judgment could hear him without feeling that the lecturer is a man of genius, deeply imbued

with his great argument." Ashrewd observer, Charles Sumner, who heard him, says, "He spoke like an inspired boy; truths and thoughts that made one move on the benches came from his apparently unconscious mind, couched in the most grotesque style, and yet condensed to a degree of intensity—childlike in manner and feeling, and yet reaching by intuition points and extremes of ratiocination, which others would not so well accomplish after days of labour, if, indeed, they ever could." These lectures were followed by a course of twelve "On the History of Literature, or the Successive Periods of European Culture" (1838), and a course on the "Revolutions of Modern Europe" (1839).

In May 1840 Carlyle wrote to Thomas Aird—"When you read the enclosed Program, and think that my day of execution (do not hurry, good people, there can be no sport till I am there!) is fixed for Tuesday first, you will see too well the impossibility of writing any due reply. Alas, I am whirling: the sport of viewless winds! It is the humour I always get into, and cannot help it. Some way or other in four weeks more we shall be through the business, and hope not to resume it in a hurry. For lecturing, as indeed for world felicity in general, I want two things, or, perhaps, one of them, either of them would bring the other with it I suppose: health and impudence. We must do the best we can: and 'be thankful always,' as an old military gentlemen used to say, 'that we are not in purgatory.' . . . You are happy to be in green quiet places: for me, ah, me! I am here in the

whirlwind of every kind of smoke, dust, din, and inanity: 'I can't get out.' " The "Program" referred to above was for Carlyle's course of lectures "on Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History," the only series he thought worth publishing. This was his last appearance as a lecturer. He is said to have commenced by bringing a manuscript, but he evidently found it much in his way, and speedily abandoned it. The remaining lectures were delivered with the aid of some notes or headings only, and even these he paid little attention to. It seemed, said Leigh Hunt, "as if some Puritan had come to life again, liberalized by German philosophy and his own intense reflections and experience." Here is James Grant's account of the lectures:—

"Perhaps his course for the present year, which was on Hero-worship, was better attended than any previous one. Some of those who were present estimated the average attendance at three hundred. They chiefly consisted of persons of rank and wealth, as the number of carriages which each day waited the conclusion of the lecture to receive Mr Carlyle's auditors, and to carry them to their homes, conclusively testified. The locality of Mr Carlyle's lectures has, I believe, varied every year. The Hanover Rooms, Willis's Rooms, and a place in the north of London, the name of which I forget, have severally been chosen as the place whence to give utterance to his profound and original trains of thought.

"A few words will be expected here as to Mr

Carlyle's manner as a lecturer. In so far as his mere manner is concerned, I can scarcely bestow on him a word of commendation. There is something in his manner which, if I may use a rather quaint term, must seem very uncouth to London audiences of the most respectable class, accustomed as they are to the polished deportment which is usually exhibited in Willis's or the Hanover Rooms. When he enters the room, and proceeds to the sort of rostrum whence he delivers his lecture, he is, according to the usual practice in such cases, generally received with applause; but he very rarely takes any more notice of the mark of approbation thus bestowed on him, than if he were altogether unconscious of it. And the same seeming want of respect for his audience, or at any rate the same disregard for what I believe he considers the troublesome forms of politeness, is visible at the commencement of his lecture. Having ascended his desk, he gives a hearty rub to his hands, and plunges at once into his subject. He reads very closely, which indeed, must be expected considering the nature of the topics which he undertakes to discuss.* He is not prodigal of gesture with his arms or body; but there is something in his eye and countenance which indicates great earnestness of purpose and the most intense interest in his subject. You can almost fancy, in some of his most enthusiastic and

* Here Mr Grant differs from other accounts. Perhaps, however, it was the first lecture only of the course that he heard.

energetic moments, that you see his inmost soul in his face. At times, indeed very often, he so unnaturally distorts his features, as to give to his countenance a very unpleasing expression. On such occasions you would imagine that he was suddenly seized with some violent paroxysms of pain. He is one of the most ungraceful speakers I have ever heard address a public assemblage of persons. In addition to the awkwardness of his general manner, he makes mouths which would of themselves be sufficient to mar the agreeableness of his delivery. And his manner of speaking, and the ungracefulness of his gesticulation, are greatly aggravated by his strong Scotch accent. Even to the generality of Scotchmen his pronunciation is harsh in no ordinary degree. [The writer was himself a Scotchman.] Need I say, then, what it must be to an English ear."

"I was present some months ago, during the delivery of a speech by Mr Carlyle at a meeting held in the Freemasons' Tavern, for the purpose of forming a metropolitan library [the London Library, of which in 1858 Carlyle was appointed President]; and though that speech did not occupy in its delivery more than five minutes, he made use of some of the most extraordinary phraseology I ever heard employed by a human being. He made use of the expression 'this London,' which he pronounced 'this Loondun,' four or five times—a phrase which sounded grievously on the ears even of those of Mr Carlyle's own countrymen

who were present, and which must have sounded doubly harsh in the ears of an Englishman, considering the singularly broad Scotch accent with which he spoke."

Mr Grant was a very uncultured man, and far from being a deep observer, but there is a certain graphic force about his descriptions which renders them interesting. His opinion of Carlyle as a lecturer is much the same as that of a writer in *Chambers' Journal*, February 18, 1843, who says, "Although Mr Carlyle first propounded his views of Hero Worship in a series of lectures, yet it is easy to discern from his studied (sometimes painfully studied) style of writing, that he is not well adapted for an orator. We once heard him deliver a few sentiments at a public meeting, but he spoke, and that was all. Though manifestly bursting with ideas, he could not give them vent. The words that came uppermost did not please him, and he waited for others. Although he did what the best orators have been defined to do—though 'he thought upon his legs'—he did not think aloud, and the intervals between his silent thoughts and the expression of them, were too long and too frequent for the patience of a mixed auditory. Yet the few sentences he did utter were aphorisms full of wisdom."

With the opinions of three eminent men we may conclude our account of Carlyle as a lecturer. Of one which he heard Crabb Robinson said, "It gave great satisfaction, for it had uncommon thoughts, and was delivered with unusual anima-

tion." "As for Carlyle's lectures," wrote Bunsen, "they are very striking, rugged thoughts, not ready made up for any political or religious system; thrown at people's heads, by which most of his audience are sadly startled." "Attended Carlyle's lectures," says Macready, "'The hero as a prophet,' on which he descanted with a fervour and eloquence that only complete conviction of truth could give. I was charmed, carried away by him. Met Browning there."

Our notice of Carlyle's lectures has led us out of chronological order, and we shall postpone what we have to say about his literary activity after 1838 to another chapter. Here may fitly be introduced a letter of Carlyle's to David Lester Richardson, an Indian officer, written in December 1837, in acknowledgment of his "Literary Leaves," a volume of very miscellaneous contents. Probably a highly eulogistic notice of Edward Irving was the feature in the book that made Carlyle think so highly of it. The letter was facsimiled in the *Autographic Mirror*, July 1865:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your courteous gift, with the letter accompanying it, reached me only about a week ago, though dated 20th of June, almost at the opposite point of the year. Whether there has been any undue delay or not is unknown to me, but, at anyrate, on my side there ought to be no delay.

"I have read your volume—what little of it was known to me before, and the much that was not

known—I can say with true pleasure. It is written, as few volumes in these days are, with fidelity, with successful care, with insight and conviction as to matter, with clearness and graceful precision as to manner: in a word, it is the impress of a mind stored with elegant accomplishments, gifted with an eye to see, and a heart to understand; a welcome, altogether recommendable book. More than once I have said to myself and others, How many parlour firesides are there this winter in England, at which this volume, could one give credible announcement of its quality, would be right pleasant company? There are very many, *could* one give the announcement: but no such announcement *can* be given; therefore the parlour firesides must even put up with —, or what other stuff chance shovels in the way, and read, though with malediction all the time. It is a great pity, but no man can help it. We are now arrived seemingly pretty near the point when all criticism and proclamation in matters literary has degenerated into an inane jargon, incredible, unintelligible, inarticulate as the cawing of choughs and rooks; and many things in that as in other provinces, are in a state of painful and rapid transition. A good book has no way of recommending itself except slowly and as it were accidentally from hand to hand. The man that wrote it must abide his time. He needs, as indeed all men do, the *faith* that this world is built, not on falsehood and jargon, but on truth and reason; that no good thing done by any creature of God was, is, or ever can be *lost*, but will verily do the

service appointed for it, and be found among the general sum-total of all things after long time, nay, after all time, and through eternity itself. Let him 'cast his bread upon the waters' therefore, cheerful of heart, 'he will find it after many days.'

"I know not why I write all this to you; it comes very spontaneously from me. Let it be your satisfaction, the highest a man can have in this world, that the talent entrusted to you did not lie useless, but was turned to account, and proved itself to be a talent; and the 'publishing world' can receive it altogether according to their own pleasure, raise it high on the house tops or trample it low into the street kennels; that is not the question at all, the *thing* remains precisely what it was after never such raising and never such depressing and trampling, there is no change whatever in *it*. I bid you go on and prosper.

"One thing grieves me: the tone of sadness, I might say of settled melancholy, that runs through all your utterances of yourself. It is not right, it is wrong; and yet how shall I reprove you? If you knew me, you would triumphantly [*sic*] for any spiritual endowment bestowed on a man, that it is accompanied, or one might say *preceded*, as the first origin of it, always by a delicacy of organization, which in a world like ours is sure to have itself manifoldly afflicted, tormented, darkened down into sorrow and disease. You feel yourself an exile in the East; but in the West too it is exile; I know not where under the sun it is not

exile. Here in the Fog-Babylon, amid mud and smoke, in the infinite din of 'vociferous platitude,' and quack out-bellowing quack, with truth and pity on all hands ground under the wheels, can one call it a hope or a world? It is a waste chaos where we have to swim painfully for our life. The utmost a man can do is to swim there like a man, and hold his peace. For this seems to me a great truth in any exile or chaos whatever, that sorrow was not given us for sorrow's sake, but always and infallibly as a lesson to us, from which we are to learn somewhat; and which, the somewhat once *learned*, ceases to be sorrow. I do believe this; and study in general to 'consume my own smoke,' not, indeed, without very ugly out-puffs at times! Allan Cunningham is the best, he tells me that always as one grows older, one grows happier: a thing also which I really can believe. But as for you, my dear sir, you have other work to do in the East than grieve. Are there not beautiful things there; glorious things; wanting only an eye to note them, a hand to record them? If I had the command over you, I would say, read *Paul et Virginie*, then read the *Chaumière Indienne*; gird yourself together for a right effort, and go and do likewise or better! I mean what I say. The East has its own phases, there are things there which the West yet knows not of; and one Heaven covers both. He that has an eye let him look!

"I hope you forgive me this style I have got into. It seems to me on reading your book as if we had been long acquainted in some measure; as if one

might speak to you right from the heart. I hope we shall meet some day or other. I send you my constant respect and good wishes; and am and remain, yours very truly always,

T. CARLYLE,"

S U C C E S S .

CHAPTER IV.

SUCCESS.

UP to the time of the publication of the "French Revolution," in the forty-second year of his age, Carlyle, to the reading public at large, had been a comparatively unknown writer. A small circle of gifted men, it is true, had long before known and appreciated his talents, but he had not attained any wide-spread recognition ; and was in general looked upon merely as a man of some genius and great eccentricity. We can recall no other case in literary history of a writer of the very first order of genius remaining so long in obscurity ; and though Carlyle had no lack of that lofty and steady confidence in himself, which Dr Johnson says men of great powers usually have, his long neglect must have done much to sadden him, and may have contributed not a little to give him that pessimistic view of human destiny, which more or less pervades all his works. After 1838, however, when his "French Revolution," "Sartor Resartus," and "Miscellanies," had been published, he came to be regarded as a literary phenomenon, whose productions were deserving at least of criticism if not of admiration—as an author whose works no person of culture

could be in ignorance of without incurring the reproach of negligence. It well shows the general neglect of Carlyle for many years, and the increased attention with which he now began to be regarded, to find such a man as Sydney Smith writing in the beginning of 1840, "I have not yet read Carlyle, though I have got him on my list. I am rather curious about him." With the pleasures of increased fame, Carlyle experienced not a few of its penalties. He was looked on as a sort of literary lion, whose sayings and doings were worthy of being noted; he was pestered by foolish visitors, who came to have a look at the great man; and he was invited to parties to be duly "shown off"—an operation he peculiarly detested. If an invitation came from some great personage with whom he was very slightly acquainted it was generally summarily rejected. "I can't go to these people's dinners," he would say, "I cannot give them anything in return, and I won't go to be stared at."

In 1839, Carlyle appeared as a labourer in a new field, that of politics, by the publication of his pamphlet on "Chartism." One may perhaps be permitted to express a regret that he should ever have deserted the flowery fields of literature for the rough and thorny mazes of political disquisition, especially since it so rarely happens that a man with no practical experience of public affairs is able to give really valuable advice upon them. There are few, even of Carlyle's most enthusiastic admirers, who would not gladly

exchange all his political works for three or four of such admirable studies as those he has left us of Burns and Dr Johnson. But Carlyle felt that he had a mission to perform in politics as well as in literature, and so gave his opinions upon the "Condition of England Question," in a series of utterances which, whatever may be their intrinsic value, are often lit up by splendid and fiery eloquence. The difference in tone between Carlyle's political and literary writings is very marked: In his literary productions the soft and emotional side of his nature appears prominently; as a general rule, his pity for the wanderer from the strict path of duty is much more marked than his indignation against him. In his political productions, on the other hand, he is frequently as vindictive and Rhadamanthine as the sternest old Puritan could have been: Throughout life he was strongly opposed to the abolition of capital punishment, and often expressed himself in favour of it with a vigour that considerably surprised his hearers. The late Bishop Wilberforce once met him at a party along with Monckton Milnes. Milnes began what Wilberforce calls "the young man's cant" about the barbarity and wickedness of capital punishment; that after all we could not be sure others were wicked, &c. Carlyle broke out on him with, "None of your Heaven and Hell amalgamation companies for me. We *do* know what is wickedness. I know wicked men—men *whom I would not live with*; men whom, under some conceivable circumstances, I would kill or they would kill me.

No, Milnes, there is no truth or greatness in all that. It's just poor, miserable littleness. There was far more greatness in the way of your old German fathers, who, when they found one of these wicked men, dragged him to the peat bog, and thrust him in, and said, '*There*, go in there. There is the place for such as thee.'" For all gentle methods in the treatment of criminals, Carlyle uniformly expressed his contempt and abhorrence.

Among those who perused the pamphlet on "Chartism," with great admiration, was Dr Chalmers, who, in sending Carlyle a copy of his work on Pauperism, said, "I have read your '*Chartism*' with the greatest interest, and have endeavoured, however feebly, to express my sense of its merits." In replying to Chalmers's letter (October 11, 1841), Carlyle said, that he was always glad and proud to be remembered by one who was always memorable to him, and memorable to all the world, whether they had seen or had not seen him. "It seems to me," he goes on to say, "a great truth this fundamental principle of yours, which I trace as the origin of all these hopes, endeavours, and convictions in regard to pauperism, that human things cannot stand on selfishness, mechanical utilities, economics, and law courts; that if there be not a religious element in the relations of men, such relations are miserable and doomed to ruin. A poor law can be no lasting remedy; the poor and the rich, when once the naked parts of their condition come into collision, cannot long live together upon a poor-law! Solely as a sad transitionalary

palliative against still fiercer miseries and insupportabilities can it pretend to recommend itself, till something better be vouchsafed us, with *true* healing under its wings!

“Alas! the poor of this country seem to me in these years to be fast becoming the miserablest of all sorts of men. Black slaves in South Carolina, I do believe, deserve pity enough; but the black is at least not stranded, cast ashore, from the stream of human interests, and left to perish there; he is connected with human interests, *belongs* to those above him, if only as a slave. Blacks too, I suppose, are cased in a beneficent wrapping of stupidity and insensibility; one pallid Paisley weaver, with the sight of his famishing children round him, with the memory of his decent, independent father before him, has probably more wretchedness in his single heart than a hundred blacks. Did you observe the late trial at Stockport, in Cheshire, of a human father and human mother, for poisoning three of their children, to gain successively some £3, 8s. from a burial society for each of them? A barrister of my acquaintance, who goes that circuit, informs me positively that the official people durst not go farther into this business; that the case was by no means a solitary one there; that, on the whole, they thought it good to close up the matter swiftly again from the light of day, and investigate it no deeper. ‘The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children!’ Such a state of matters cannot subsist under the firmament of heaven; such a state of matters will remedy itself

as God lives—remedy itself, if not by mild means, then by fierce and fiercest!

“That you, with your generous hopeful heart, believe there may still exist in our actual churches enough of divine fire to awaken the supine rich and the degraded poor, and act victoriously against such a mass of pressing and ever accumulating evils—alas! what worse could be said of this by the bitterest opponent of it, than that it is a noble hoping against hope, a noble strenuous determination to gather from the dry deciduous tree what the green alone could yield. Surely, for those who have still such a faith, I will vote that they should have all possible room to try it in. With a Chalmers in every British parish much might be possible! But, alas! what assurance is there that in any one British parish there will ever be another?”*

In 1839 two important reviews of Carlyle's works saw the light. One was by John Sterling, who criticised them in a broad and generous spirit in the *Westminster Review*. “What the effect of the article was on the public,” writes Carlyle, “I knew not, and know not; but remember well, and may here be permitted to acknowledge, the deep, silent joy, not of a weak or ignoble nature, which it gave to myself in my then mood and situation; as it well might. The first generous human recognition, expressed with heroic emphasis, and clear conviction visible amid its fiery exaggeration, that one's poor battle in this world is not quite a mad and futile,

* This letter will be found in full in Hanna's “Life of Chalmers,” Vol. IV., p. 199.

that it is, perhaps, a worthy and manful one, which will come to something yet : this fact is a memorable one in every history ; and for me Sterling, often enough the stiff gainsayer in our private communings, was the doer of this. The thought burnt in me like a lamp for several days ; lighting up with a kind of heroic splendour the sad volcanic wrecks, abysses, and convulsions of said poor battle, and secretly I was very grateful to my daring friend, and am still, and ought to be." The other review appeared in the *Quarterly*. Though evidently written by a staunch Churchman who had little sympathy with Carlyle's ecclesiastical 'heresies,' it is an appreciative and, from the writer's peculiar point of view, a just article. Carlyle's writings are declared to have so much truth in them, and so many evidences not only of an inquiring and deep-thinking mind, but of a humble, trustful, and affectionate heart, as to deserve kindly treatment. The main object of the article is to bring forward the Church (by which is meant the Church of England) as the true cure of all the social evils complained of by Carlyle.

1839 is further notable as being the year in which was presented "To the Honourable the Commons of England in Parliament assembled, the petition of Thomas Carlyle, a writer of books." Few things during the discussion on the Copyright Bill attracted more attention than the singularly touching document. "That your petitioner," it declared, "has written certain books, being incited thereto by various innocent or laudable considera-

tions, chiefly by the thought that said books might in the end be found to be worth something. That your petitioner had not the happiness to receive from Mr Thomas Tegg, or any publisher, republisher, printer, bookseller, or other the like man or body of men, any encouragement or countenance in writing of said books, or to discern any chance of receiving such ; but wrote them by effort of his own, and the favour of Heaven. . . . That his labour has found hitherto, in money or money's worth, small recompense or none ; that he is by no means sure of its ever finding recompense ; but thinks that, if so, it will be at a distant time, when he, the labourer, will probably no longer be in need of money, and those dear to him will still be in need of it."* For these and other reasons he asked that the copyright of his works should be secured to him for a space of sixty years at the shortest. What was Carlyle's grievance against "Mr Thomas Tegg," in particular, we do not know. In 1842, when Dickens was in America, Carlyle returned to the copyright question by addressing to him a letter in favour of international copyright. "In discussion of the matter before any Congress or Parliament," he there said, "manifold considerations and argumentations will necessarily arise ; which to me are not interesting, nor essential for helping me to a decision. They respect the time and manner in which the thing should be ; not at all whether the thing should be or not. In an ancient book, re-

* The petition will be found in Carlyle's "Miscellanies," vol, vi., p. 187. (People's Edition.)

verenced, I should hope on both sides of the ocean, it was thousands of years ago written down in the most decisive and explicit manner, 'Thou *shalt not* steal.' That thou belongest to a different 'Nation,' and canst steal without being certainly hanged for it, gives thee no permission to steal! Thou shalt *not* in anywise steal at all! So it is written down for nations and for men in the law book of the Maker of this universe. Nay, poor Jeremy Bentham and others step in here, and will demonstrate that it is actually our true convenience and expediency not to steal; which I, for my share, on the grand scale and on the small, and in all conceivable scales and shapes, do also firmly believe it to be. For example, if nations abstained from stealing, what need were there of fighting,—with its butcherings and burnings, decidedly the most expensive thing in this world. How much more two nations, which, as I said, are but one nation: knit in a hundred ways by Nature and practical intercourse; indivisible brother elements of the same great SAXON-DOOM to which all in honourable ways be long life." *

Carlyle's views as to the state of periodical literature in England in 1840, are set forth in a letter to Rev. James Dodds, who had asked his advice as to his cousin, James Dodds, who had evinced strong leanings towards literature. We quote part of it from the recently published memoir of James Dodds. "There is no madder section of human business now weltering under the sun," he writes,

* Forster's "Life of Dickens," Book iii., chap. iii.

"than that of periodical literature in England at this day. The meagrest bread-and-water wages at any honest, steady, occupation, I should say, are preferable to a young man, especially for an ambitious, excitable young man. I mistake much if your cousin were not wise to stick steadfastly by his law, and what benefits it will yield him; studying, of 'course, in all ways, to perfect and cultivate himself, but leaving all literary glory, &c., to lie in the distance, an obscure possibility of the future, which he might attain, perhaps, but also could do very well without attaining. In another year, it seems, his official salary may be expected to increase into something tolerable; he has his mother and loved ones within reach; he has, or by diligence, can borrow or have, some books worth reading; his own free heart is within him, to shape into humble wisdom, or mar into violent madness; God's great sky is over him, God's green, peaceable earth around him. I really know not that he ought to be in haste to quit such arrangements. Nevertheless, if he persist in his purpose to write, which in my ignorance of the details of his situation, I know not that he should absolutely avoid doing, let him by all means try it. If he turn out to have the fit talent he will decidedly find an editor; if not, it is better in all ways that he do not find one." The subject of this advice took it to heart, and made law the main business of his life. The following passage from one of Carlyle's letters to him, dated September 21, 1841, is very beautiful and characteristic. "It will be good news in all time coming,"

he says, "to learn that such a life as yours unfolds itself according to its promise, and becomes in some tolerable degree what it is capable of being. The problem is your own to make or to mar; a great problem for you as the like is for every man born into this world. You have my entire sympathy in your denunciations of the 'explosive' character. It is frequent in these times; and deplorable wherever met with. Explosions are ever wasteful, woeful; central fire should not explode itself, but lie silent, far down, at the centre, and make all good fruits *grow*. We cannot too often repeat to ourselves, 'Strength is seen not in spasms, but in stout bearing of burdens.' You can take comfort in the meanwhile, if you need it, by the experience of all wise men, that a right heavy burden is precisely the thing wanted for a young strong man. Grievous to be borne; but bear it well; you will find it one day to have been verily blessed. 'I would not for any money,' said the brave Jean Paul in his quaint way, 'have had money in my youth.' He speaks a truth there, singular as it may seem to many. By the way, do you read German? It would be well worth your while to learn it; and not impossible, not even difficult, even where you are, if you are so resolved. These young obscure years ought to be incessantly employed in gaining knowledge of things worth knowing, especially of heroic human souls worth knowing; and you may believe me, the obscurer such years are, it is apt to be the better. Books are needed, but yet not many books, a few well read. An open, true, patient, and valiant

soul is needed ; that is the one thing needful. I have no time here in this immeasurable treadmill of a place, to answer letters. But you may take it for a new fact, that if you can, as you say, write *without* answer, your letters shall be altogether welcome ! If at anytime a definite service can be done by answering, doubt not I shall make time for it."

At the time of which we are now writing, Carlyle's few contributions to the "weltering chaos" of periodical literature appeared for the most part in the *London and Westminster Review*, then edited by his friend John Mill. His connection with it commenced in 1831, by the publication of his remarkable paper on the "Nibelungen Lied ;" which was followed by several other articles from his pen, including that estimate of Sir Walter Scott, which has given rise to so much discussion. In June 1841, however, we find him, after a long interval, again addressing the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. "For a long while past," he writes, "it has occasionally seemed to me as if I might do worse than, some time or other, write an essay on that notable Phenomenon, consisting of George Sand, Abbé Lamennais, &c., with their writings ; what Goethe well names the 'Literature of Desperation.' I find enormous temporary mischief, and even a radical perversion, falsity, and delirium in it, yet withal the struggle towards an indispensable ulterior good. The taste for it among Radical men, especially among Radical women, is spreading everywhere ; perhaps a good word on it in these

circumstances were worthy of uttering? For several reasons, especially at the present moment, your *Review*, rather than another, were the place for such a thing. I do not know of late years how you go on at all; but I think, if you gave me elbowroom, I might produce a useful and pleasant piece, not entirely discordant with your general tendencies. At all events, I will ask you to write me as soon as possible a word on this project. I hope very shortly to get away into my native region for some months; if, on closer practical inspection, the thing seemed then feasible and suitable, I might take the necessary books with me, and occupy some portion of my leisure with it there."

Napier's reply was favourable; but like so many of Carlyle's projects, the design, to the irreparable loss of literature, was never carried into execution. From Ecclefechan, in July 12, 1841, Carlyle wrote to Napier, "Your courteous and obliging letter reached me before I left town. For the last fortnight I have been wandering to and fro, and could not till a few days ago make any definite reply. Arriving here, I find myself disappointed of the house I had counted on occupying, in this native region of mine, till winter; find myself disappointed of several things; and, on the whole, not likely to continue here much longer than a month; but again to wander, and to spend my summer season differently from what I had expected. One of the things that fall to the ground in consequence is that project of an article on the present aspects of

Poetic Literature in France. It returns, alas, to the state of a hope or wish ; and cannot, I fear, become a fact, for the present ! You must pardon me for having troubled you with it. My excuse is that of Melbourne on the Corn-Laws ; that of many men in the like circumstances ; ‘Sons of Time’ and subjects more or less of chance which Time brings ! If I ever do write the article, if it do not die in the mere condition of a wish, as so much more does with us, I will offer it to you, and have you and your terms and capabilities in view while writing it.” This is the last letter of Carlyle’s which appears in the very entertaining collection of Napier’s Correspondence.

In March 1843, Carlyle addressed the following interesting letter to a young man who had written to him asking his advice as to what he should read. It was first published, we believe, in a small local newspaper, the *Cupar and St Andrews Monthly Advertiser*.

“DEAR SIR,—Some time ago your letter was delivered to me. I take literally the first free half hour I have had since to write you a word of advice.

“It would give me true satisfaction could any advice of mine contribute to forward you in your honourable course of self-improvement, but a long experience has taught me that advice can profit but little ; that there is a good reason why advice is so seldom followed ; this reason, namely, that it is so seldom, and can almost never be, rightly

given. No man knows the state of another ; it is always to some more or less imaginary man that the wisest and most honest adviser is speaking.

“As to the books which you—whom I know so little of—should read, there is hardly anything definite that can be said. For one thing, you may be strenuously advised to keep reading. Any good book, any book that is wiser than yourself, will teach you something—a great many things, indirectly and directly, if your mind is open to learn. This old counsel of Johnson’s is also good, and universally applicable—‘Read the book you do honestly feel a wish and curiosity to read.’ The very wish and curiosity indicates that you, then and there, are the person likely to get good of it. ‘Our wishes are presentiments of our capabilities ;’ that is a noble saying, of deep encouragement to all true men ; applicable to our wishes and efforts in regard to reading as to other things. Among all the objects that look wonderful or beautiful to you, follow with fresh hope the one which looks wonder-fullest, beautifullest—what is *your* true element and province, and be able to profit by that. True desire, the monition of nature, is much to be attended to. But here, also, you are to discriminate carefully between *true* desire and false. The medical men tell us we should eat what we truly have an appetite for ; but what we only falsely have an appetite for we should resolutely avoid. It is very true ; and flimsy, desultory readers, who fly from foolish book to foolish book, and get good of none, and mischief of all,—are not these as foolish, un-

healthy eaters, who mistake their superficial false desire after spiceries and confectionaries for their real appetite, of which even they are not destitute, though it lies far deeper, far quieter, after solid nutritive food? With these illustrations, I will recommend Johnson's advice to you.

"Another thing, and only one other, I will say. All books are properly the record of the history of past men—what thoughts past men had in them—what actions past men did: the summary of all books whatsoever lies there. It is on this ground that the class of books specifically named History can be safely recommended as the basis of all study of books—the preliminary to all right and full understanding of anything we can expect to find in books. Past history, and especially the past history of one's own native country, everybody may be advised to begin with that. Let him study that faithfully; innumerable inquiries will branch out from it; he has a broad beaten highway, from which all the country is more or less visible; there travelling, let him choose where he will dwell.

"Neither let mistakes and wrong directions—of which every man, in his studies and elsewhere, falls into many—discourage you. There is precious instruction to be got by finding that we are wrong.

"Let a man try faithfully, manfully, to be right, he will grow daily more and more right. It is at bottom the condition on which all men have to cultivate themselves. Our very walking is an incessant falling—a falling and catching of ourselves

before we come actually to the pavement!—it is emblematic of all things a man does.

"In conclusion, I will remind you that it is not by books alone, or by books chiefly, that a man becomes in all points a man. Study to do faithfully whatsoever thing in your actual situation, there and now, you find either expressly or tacitly laid to your charge; that is your part; stand in it like a true soldier. Silently devour the many chagrins of it, as all human situations have many; and see you aim not to quit it without doing all that it, at least, required of you. A man perfects himself by work much more than by reading. There are a growing kind of men that can wisely combine the two things—wisely, valiantly, can do what is laid to their hand in their present sphere, and prepare themselves withal for doing other wider things, if such lie before them.

"With many good wishes and encouragements, I remain, yours sincerely, THOMAS CARLYLE."

In the same year as that in which the foregoing letter was written appeared "*Past and Present*," Carlyle's second important contribution to the "*Condition of England*" question. The book is rather a collection of scraps loosely connected together than a coherent whole. First we have a "*Proem*," containing chapters on "*Hero-Worship*," the "*Aristocracy of Talent*," &c., then follows the portion of the book relating to the "*Past*," a lively and vivid account of a certain Abbot Samson of St Edmundsbury, who, in a small sphere, and with

no hope of his name ever being celebrated, proved himself a genuine leader of men; then comes "The Modern Worker," apparently a collection of short papers expressing Carlyle's views on many social and political questions; and, lastly, we are treated to a "Horoscope," containing some glimpses of what may yet be. The work is notable as containing more "practical" matter than any of Carlyle's other political writings. The aristocracy are warned to cease from "preserving their game," and exhorted to devote themselves to higher things; emigration, education, and sanitary improvement are enforced; and the repeal of the corn-laws (perhaps, with the exception of the Reform Bill of 1832, the only scheme of political reform in our time which excited Carlyle's warm approval) is advocated. As in all Carlyle's works, a wise conservatism is praised, and the duty of obedience strongly urged. "To learn obeying," he says, "is the fundamental art of governing." Obedience, indeed, may be said to be the corner-stone of his moral teaching. A boy who once wrote to him asking his autograph was considerably astonished to receive the following maxim in reply—"What was the first crime in the universe? Disobedience. Do not try mutiny till all other shifts are exhausted." With "Past and Present," should be read the essay on Dr Francia, that "panegyric of the gallows" as it has been termed. Together they will be found to throw a good deal of light on Carlyle's notions as to how the world should be governed.

In "Past and Present," book ii., chap. xv., we

read "Methodism with its eye for ever turned on its own navel; asking itself with torturing anxiety of hope and fear, 'Am I right? am I wrong? Shall I be saved? shall I not be damned?' What is this, at bottom, but a new phasis of *Egoism*, stretched out into the Infinite; not always the heavenlier for its infinitude! Brother, so soon as possible, endeavour to rise above all that. 'Thou *art* wrong; thou art like to be damned;' consider that as the fact, reconcile thyself even to that, if thou be a man." This agrees with what Carlyle said to Milburn. "You are a Wesleyan, sir, I understand?" he asked him one evening as they were smoking together. "I am," replied Milburn, "or rather, as we are called in America, a Methodist." "I must tell you, sir," said Carlyle, "that I have ceased to think as highly of that people as I used to do. It was formerly my fortune, whenever I went to service, to attend their chapels. We've a queer place in this country called the Derbyshire Peaks; and I was there some years ago for a part of the summer, and went on the Lord's day to the Wesleyan chapel; and a man got up and preached with extraordinary fluency and vehemence, and I was astonished at his eloquence. And they told me that he was a nail-maker, that he wrought six days in the week with his own hands for his daily bread, and preached upon the seventh without charge. And when he had ended, another man came forward and prayed; and I was greatly moved by the unction of his prayer. And they told me that he was a rope-maker, and that he toiled as the other. But the sum and end of all the fluency

and vehemence of the sermon, and of all the fervour of the prayer, was : ' Lord save us from hell ! ' and I went away musing, sick at heart, saying to myself : ' My good fellows, why all this bother and noise ? If it be God's will, why not go and be damned in quiet, and say never a word about it ? And I, for one, would think far better of you.' So it seemed to me that your Wesleyans made cowards ; and I would have no more to do with their praying and their preaching."

The most notable review of " Past and Present " was that by Mazzini, " On the Genius and Tendency of the writings of Thomas Carlyle," which appeared in the *British and Foreign Review* of October 1843. While expressing the highest admiration of Carlyle's great powers, Mazzini did not hesitate to declare his dissent from much of his teaching. He and Carlyle were well acquainted, and Carlyle held in high esteem his fine character, although regarding his theories with little sympathy. When, in 1844, the great public outcry about the illegal opening of Mazzini's letters arose, he addressed the following vigorous letter to the *Times* :—

" SIR,—In your observations in yesterday's *Times* on the late disgraceful affair of Mr Mazzini's letters and the Secretary of State, you mention that Mr Mazzini is entirely unknown to you, entirely indifferent to you ; and add, very justly, that if he were the most contemptible of mankind, it would not affect your argument on the subject.

" It may tend to throw further light on this

matter if I now certify you, which I in some sort feel called upon to do, that Mr Mazzini is not unknown to various competent persons in this country; and that he is very far indeed from being contemptible—none farther, or very few of living men. I have had the honour to know Mr Mazzini for a series of years; and, whatever I may think of his practical insight and skill in worldly affairs, I can with great freedom, testify to all men, that he, if I have ever seen one such, is a man of genius and virtue, a man of sterling veracity, humanity, and nobleness of mind; one of these rare men, numerable, unfortunately, but as units in this world, who are worthy to be called martyr souls; who, in silence, piously in their daily life, understand and practise what is meant by that.

“Of Italian democracies and young Italy’s sorrows, of extraneous Austrian Emperors in Milan, or poor old chimerical Popes in Bologna, I know nothing, and desire to know nothing; but this other thing I do know, and can here publicly declare to be a fact, which fact all of us that have occasion to comment on Mr Mazzini and his affairs may do dwell to take along with us, as a thing leading towards new clearness, and not towards new additional darkness, regarding him and them.

“Whether the extraneous Austrian Emperor, and miserable old chimera of a Pope shall maintain themselves in Italy, or be obliged to decamp from Italy is not a question in the least vital to Englishmen. But it is a question vital to us that sealed letters in an English post-office be, as we all fancied

they were, respected as things sacred ; that opening of men's letters, a practice near to kin of picking men's pockets, and to other still viler and far fataler forms of scoundrelism, be not resorted to in England, except in cases of the very last extremity. When some new gunpowder plot may be in the wind, some double-dyed high treason, or imminent national wreck not avoidable otherwise, then let us open letters—not till then.

“To all Austrian Kaisers and such like, in their time of trouble, let us answer, as our fathers from of old have answered :—Not by such means is help here for you. Such means, allied to picking of pockets and viler forms of scoundrelism, are not permitted in this country for your behoof. The right hon. Secretary does himself detest such, and even is afraid to employ them. He durst not, it would be dangerous for him ! All British men that might chance to come in view of such a transaction, would incline to spurn it, and trample on it, and indignantly ask him, what he meant by it ? —I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

“THOMAS CARLYLE.”

In 1845 appeared the second of Carlyle's great historical works, “Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, with Elucidations.” The subject is one which, from his youth upwards, had occupied his mind, if it be true, as is said, that the correct idea of Cromwell's character was first suggested to him by his mother. In 1840 he remarked in one of his “Lectures on Heroes,” “One Puritan, I think, and

almost he alone, our poor Oliver, seems to hang yet on his gibbet, and finds no hearty apologist anywhere. His dead body was hung in chains; his 'Place in History' has been a place of ignominy, accusation, blackness, and disgrace; and here to-day, who knows if it is not a rash act in me to be among the first to pronounce him not a knave and a liar, but a genuinely honest man?" It is not at all improbable that at this time Carlyle had already formed his great design for vindicating his memory. In 1843 John Sterling writes to him, "It is, as you say, your destiny to write about Cromwell; and you will make a book of him, at which the ears of our grandchildren will tingle; and, as one may hope that the ears of human nature will be growing longer and longer, the tingling will be proportionately greater than we are accustomed to." Sterling's anticipations were amply realised. Carlyle performed his difficult task with the care of an antiquary and the genius of a poet, making the dry bones of history to live again, and rescuing the fair fame of the greatest of England's rulers from the slander and misconception of two centuries. "These authentic utterances of the man Oliver himself," he says, "I have gathered from far and near; fished them up from the foul Lethean quagmires where they lay buried; I have washed, or endeavoured to wash, them clean from foreign stupidities (such a job of buckwashing as I do not long to repeat); and the world shall now see them in their own shape." "Cromwell" was the most immediately successful of Carlyle's

works. The first edition, "contrary to expectation," he says, "spread itself abroad with some degree of impetus," and a second edition was called for within a year. The third edition appeared in 1849.

The following passages from the letters of Margaret Fuller, who, while in London, saw Carlyle frequently, give a lively idea of Carlyle's manner and conversation in 1846. It must be remembered that she herself was a great talker, and estimated her own abilities at the very highest rate:—

"Of the people I saw in London, you will wish me to speak first of the Carlyles. Mr C. came to see me at once, and appointed an evening to be passed at their house. That first time I was delighted with him. He was in a very sweet humour—full of wit and pathos, without being overbearing or oppressive. I was quite carried away with the rich flow of his discourse; and the hearty, noble earnestness of his personal being brought back the charm which once was upon his writing before I wearied of it. I admired his Scotch—his way of singing his great full sentences, so that each one was like the stanza of a narrative ballad. He let me talk now and then enough to free my lungs and change my position, so that I did not get tired. That evening he talked of the present state of things in England, giving light, witty sketches of the men of the day, fanatics, and others, and some sweet homely stories he told of things he had known of the Scotch peasantry. Of you (Emerson) he spoke with hearty kindness; and told, with beautiful feel-

ing, a story of some poor farmer or artizan in the country, who on Sundays lays aside the cark and care of that dirty English world, and sits reading the Essays, and looking upon the sea.

"I left him that night intending to go very often to his house. I assure you there never was anything so witty as Carlyle's description of ———. It was enough to kill me with laughing. I, on my side, contributed a story to his fund of anecdote on this subject, and it was fully appreciated. Carlyle is worth a thousand of you for that;—he is not ashamed to laugh when he is amused, but goes on in a cordial human fashion.

"The second time, Mr C. had a dinner-party, at which was a witty, French, flippant sort of man (the late George Henry Lewes), author of a 'History of Philosophy,' and now writing a life of Goethe, a task for which he must be as unfit as irreligion and sparkling shallowness can make him. But he told stories admirably, and was allowed sometimes to interrupt Carlyle a little, of which one was glad, for that night he was in his more acrid mood, and though much more brilliant than on the former evening, grew wearisome to me, who disclaimed and rejected almost everything he said.

"For a couple of hours he was talking about poetry, and the whole harangue was one eloquent proclamation of the defects in his own mind. Tennyson wrote in verse, because the schoolmasters had taught him that it was great to do so, and had thus, unfortunately, been turned from the true path for a man. Burns had, in like manner, been turned

from his vocation. Shakespeare had not the good sense to see that it would have been better to write straight on in prose; and such nonsense, which though amusing at first, he ran to death after a while.

"The most amusing part is always when he comes back to some refrain, as in the French Revolution of the *sea-green*. In this instance, it was Petrarch and *Laura*, the last word pronounced with his ineffable sarcasm of drawl. Although he said this over fifty times, I could not ever help laughing when *Laura* would come; Carlyle running his chin out when he spoke it, and his eyes glancing till they looked like the eyes and beak of a bird of prey. Poor Laura! Lucky for her that her poet had already got her safely canonized beyond the Teufelsdröckh vulture!

"The worst of hearing Carlyle is, that you cannot interrupt him. I understand the habit and power of haranguing have increased very much upon him, so that you are a perfect prisoner when he has once got hold of you. To interrupt him is a physical impossibility. If you get a chance to remonstrate a moment, he raises his voice and bears you down. True, he does you no injustice, and with his admirable penetration, sees the disclaimer in your mind, so that you are not morally delinquent; but it is not pleasant to be unable to utter it. The latter part of the evening, however, he paid us for this, by a series of sketches, in his finest style of railing and raillery, of modern French literature, not one of them, perhaps, perfectly just, but all drawn with the finest, boldest strokes, and, from his point of view, masterly.

All were depreciating except that of Beranger. Of him he spoke with perfect justice, because with hearty sympathy.

"I had, afterward, some talk with Mrs C., whom hitherto I had only *seen*, for who can talk while her husband is there? I like her very much, she is full of grace, and sweetness, and talent. Her eyes are sad and charming.

"After this they went to stay at Lord Ashburton's,* and I only saw them once more, when they came to pass an evening with us. Unluckily Mazzini was with us, whose society, when he was there alone, I enjoyed more than any. He is a beauteous and pure music; also, he is a dear friend of Mrs C., but his being there gave the conversation a turn to 'progress' and ideal subjects, and Carlyle was fluent on all our 'rose-water imbecilities.' We all felt distant from him, and Mazzini, after some vain efforts to remonstrate, became very sad. Mrs C. said to me, 'These are but opinions to Carlyle; but to Mazzini, who has given his all, and helped [to] bring his friends to the scaffold in pursuit of such subjects, it is a matter of life and death.'

"All Carlyle's talk that evening was a defence of mere force—success the test of right—if people

* It was at Lord Ashburton's in 1850 (as we read in Mr Trevelyan's "Life of Macaulay"), at a party at which Macaulay was present, that Carlyle was wofully bored by the irresistible proofs of Sir Philip Francis—"As if it could matter the value of a brass farthing to any human being who was the author of Junius!"

would not behave well, put collars round their necks; find a hero, and let them be his slaves, &c. It was very Titanic, and anti-celestial. I wish the last evening had been more melodious. However, I bid Carlyle farewell with feelings of the warmest respect and admiration. We cannot feel otherwise to a great and noble nature, whether it harmonise with our own or not. I never appreciated the work he has done till I saw England. I could not. You must stand in the shadow of that mountain of shams, to know how hard it is to cast light across it. Honour to Carlyle! *Hoch!* Although in the wine with which we drink his health, I, for one, must mingle the despised rose-water.

"*Paris, December 1846.*—Accustomed to the infinite wit and exuberant richness of his writings, his talk is still an amazement scarcely to be faced with steady eyes. He does not converse; only harangues. It is the usual misfortune of such marked men—happily not one invariable or inevitable—that they cannot allow other minds room to breathe, and show themselves in their atmosphere, and thus miss the refreshment and instruction which the greatest never cease to need from the experience of the humblest.

"Carlyle allows no one a chance, but bears down all opposition, not only by his wit and onset of words, resistless in their sharpness as so many bayonets, but by actual physical superiority—raising his voice, and rushing on his opponent with a torrent of sound. This is not in the least from unwillingness to allow freedom to others. On the

contrary, no man would more enjoy a manly resistance to his thought. But it is the impulse of a mind accustomed to follow out its own impulse, as the hawk its prey, and which knows not how to stop in the chase. Carlyle, indeed, is arrogant and overbearing; but in his arrogance there is no littleness—no self-love. It is the heroic arrogance of some old Scandinavian conqueror, it is his nature and the untameable impulse that has given him power to crush the dragons. You do not love him, perhaps, nor revere; and perhaps, also, he would only laugh at you if you did; but you like him heartily, and like to see him the powerful smith, the Siegfried, melting all the old iron in his furnace till it glows to a sunset red, and burns you, if you senselessly go too near.

“He seems to me quite isolated—lonely as the desert—yet never was a man more fitted to prize a man, could he find one to match his mood. He finds them, but only in the past. He sings rather than talks. He pours upon you a sort of satirical, heroical, critical poem, with regular cadences, and generally catching up, near the beginning, some singular epithet, which serves as a *refrain* when his song is full, or with which, as with a knitting needle, he catches up the stitches, if he has chanced, now and then, to let fall a row.

“For the higher kind of poetry he has no sense, and his talk on that subject is delightfully and gorgeously absurd. He sometimes stops a minute to laugh at it himself, then begins anew with fresh vigour; for all the spirits he is driving before him

seem to him as Fata Morganas, ugly masks, in fact, if he can but make them turn about; but he laughs that they seem to others such dainty Ariels. His talk, like his books, is full of pictures; his critical strokes masterly. Allow for his point of view, and his survey is admirable. He is a large subject. I cannot speak more or wiselier of him now, nor needs it; his works are true, to blame and praise him — the Siegfried of England — great and powerful, if not quite invulnerable, and of a might rather to destroy evil, than legislate for good.”

Side-by-side with this narrative of Margaret Fuller's we may place another account of Carlyle by an American visitor. It is not so striking or as trustworthy as hers: nevertheless it contains one or two characteristic features:—

“A word about Thomas Carlyle, who is probably an object of greater interest to Americans than any other living author. I received a very characteristic note one evening from this great literary non-descript, informing me that I ‘would be very welcome to him the next day at two, the hour at which he became accessible in his garret.’ His house was more than two miles from my lodgings in Trafalgar Square, and I took an omnibus nearly to the place. He resides in a neat little two-storey brick house in Chelsea, one of the environs of London, on the banks of the Thames. His housekeeper showed me at once to his ‘garret,’ and a very respectable garret it was too; the ragged poets of the Johnsonian age would have

danced to get in such an airy, well furnished apartment.

“He received me very cordially, and I sat down and began—shall I say it?—to stare at him; for I assure you Carlyle is a man to be stared at—such another is not to be seen every day. Just imagine a large, robust, broad-shouldered Scotchman, with grey eyes, dark hair, attired in a long black coat, such as is generally worn by the Methodist clergy, and poring over a German tome, and you have a considerable idea of our ‘great brother man.’ If you had not heard his name you would know him as soon as he opened his mouth, for he talks just as he writes. He gives you the same assortment of obsolete terms, picturesque phrases, outlandish epithets, and long German compounds, all mingled in a singularly uncouth, but, at the same time, singularly impressive style. I have been frequently asked if Mr Carlyle’s style appeared to be natural or affected. I am disposed to think it was at first an affectation, but he has used it so long that the mannerism has now become natural.

“After enjoying a delightful conversation with him, he took up his hat and cane, and we walked up to London. All the way he talked in his own peculiar style, with a humour and a broadness of Scotch accent that kept me laughing in spite of myself. He frankly confessed himself entirely ignorant of America, although his miscellaneous works were first collected here, and he has now five readers on this side of the Atlantic to one in England. In fact

I found him but little read there, and, on mentioning his name once at an English table, my neighbour turned and asked me who he was. Another man present replied with a sneer, 'That Chartist, he means.'

"About the time when I saw Mr Carlyle the outbreaks in the manufacturing districts were exciting great alarm; and, after he had descanted at some length on the Manchester operatives, whom he styled 'great dumb Saxons, full of old Norse ferocity,' I spoke of the happy condition of the labouring classes in our own democratic country. 'Oh, yes,' said he, 'you may talk about your democracy, or any other ocracy, or ony kind o' political rubbish; the true secret of happiness in America is, that you have a good deal of land with very few people.' His remark was, in the main true; and the great mass of evils in England, with her bread taxes and sliding scales, and parish workhouses, and trades' unions, are directly traceable to her enormous population. I was especially struck, during Mr Carlyle's conversation, with a short reminiscence of his early admiration of Robert Burns—how he used to creep over into the churchyard of Dumfries, when a little boy, and find the tomb of the poet, and sit and read the simple inscription by the hour. 'There it was,' said he, 'in the midst of poor fellow-labourers and artizans, and the name—Robert Burns!' At morn, at noon, and at eventide, he loved to go and read that name, so dear to every lover of nature, and so especially dear to a peasant boy of Scotland like

himself." This anecdote is undoubtedly apocryphal; it has not even the doubtful merit of being a skillfully-devised fable. The writer must have been quite oblivious of the fact that Ecclefechan is about sixteen miles from Dumfries.

LATTER-DAY PAMPHLETS.

CHAPTER V.

LATTER-DAY PAMPHLETS.

WITH his house at Chelsea Carlyle was not always contented; he sometimes had thoughts of quitting the locality which has become so closely identified with his name. Harriet Martineau relates that, on one occasion, the lease of the house in Cheyne Row having nearly expired, he went forth with three maps of Great Britain and two of the World in his pockets, to explore the area within twenty miles of London in order to find a suitable dwelling place. Sometimes, as we learn from a letter he addressed to Thomas Aird in 1848, he even thought of returning to Scotland. "You speak," he there writes, "of my getting back to Scotland: such an imagination dwells always in the bottom of my heart: but, alas! I begin often to surmise that it is but imaginary after all: that I am grown a pilgrim and a sojourner, and must continue such till I end it! That shall be as it pleases God. I get very ill on with all kinds and degrees of work in late days; in fact, the aspect of the world, from one end of it to the other, especially the last year, is hateful and dismal, not to say terrible and alarming, and the many miserable meanings of it strike

me dumb. The 'General Bankruptcy of Humbug!' I call it: Economics, Religions alike declaring themselves to be Mene, Mene: all public arrangements among men falling as one huge Confessed Imposture, into bottomless insolvency, Nature everywhere declaring 'No effects.' This is not a pleasant consummation, one knows not how to speak of this all at once, even if it had a clear meaning for one."

In Cheyne Row, however, Carlyle remained, and there he gathered around him troops of friends. Fashionable society he went little into; few writers of so great reputation have figured less at London dinner parties. But of friends admirable for their genius or their virtues he had abundance. John Stuart Mill, Charles Dickens, John Forster, Erskine of Linlathen, Sir George Sinclair, Mr Froude, and many others whom we might mention, regarded him with fond and admiring reverence. It was at John Forster's hospitable table that Charles Knight met him about the time of which we are now writing. "Of Mr Carlyle's conversation," he says, "I cannot call up a more accurate idea than by describing his talk as of the same character as his writings. Always forcible, often quaint and peculiar; felicitous in its occasional touches of fancy; not unfrequently sarcastic."*

Of Carlyle's many friends few had more reason to love him than Leigh Hunt, upon whom he bestowed manifold favours. It must have been a strange sight to see the two men in company

* "Passages of a Working Life," vol. iii., p. 39.

together—Carlyle filled with a deep sense of the stern realities of life, Leigh Hunt with his usual buoyant optimism persistently looking at everything in its sunniest aspect. An often-quoted anecdote, related by the author of "Orion," brings into prominence the distinguishing features of their characters. Shortly after the publication of "Heroes and Hero Worship," the two met at a party, and a conversation was started about the heroism of man. Leigh Hunt had said something about the islands of the blest, or El Dorado, or the Millennium, and was flowing on in his bright and hopeful way, when Carlyle dropped some heavy tree-trunk across Hunt's pleasant stream, and banked it up with philosophical doubts and objections at every interval of the speaker's joyous progress. But Hunt never ceased his overflowing anticipations, nor the saturnine Carlyle his infinite demurs to these finite flourishings. The listeners laughed and applauded by turns, and had now fairly pitted them against each other as the philosopher of hopefulness and of the unhopeful. The contest continued with all that ready wit and philosophy, that mixture of pleasantry and profundity, that extensive knowledge of books and character, with their ready application in argument or illustration which distinguished the two men. The opponents were so well matched that it was quite clear the contest would never come to an end. But the night was far advanced, and the party broke up. They sallied forth, and leaving the close room, the candles, and the arguments behind them, suddenly

found themselves in presence of a most brilliant starlit night. They all looked up. "There," shouted Hunt, "look up there; look at that glorious harmony that sings with infinite voices the eternal song of hope in the soul of man." Carlyle looked up, and at length, in a broad Scotch accent, said, "Eh! it's a sad sight!" Those present first laughed, then looked serious, and bidding each other good night, betook themselves homeward with slow and serious pace.

Carlyle's high estimate of Leigh Hunt is shown by some "Memoranda" concerning him, which he wrote with a view of procuring for him a pension from Government. What he wished for was at length granted, Leigh Hunt receiving from Lord John Russell, in 1847, a pension of £200 per annum. The memoranda run as follows:—

"1. That Mr Hunt is a man of the most indisputedly superior worth; a *Man of Genius* in a very strict sense of the word, and in all the senses which it bears or implies; of brilliant varied gifts, of graceful fertility, of cleverness, lovingness, truthfulness; of child-like open character; also of most pure and even exemplary private deportment; a man who can be other than *loved* only by those who have not seen him, or seen him from a distance through a false medium.

"2. That, well seen into, he *has* done much for the world; as every man possessed of such qualities, and freely speaking them forth in the abundance of his heart for thirty years long, must needs do;

how much, they that could judge best would perhaps estimate highest.

“3. That, for one thing, his services in the cause of reform as founder and long as editor of the *Examiner* newspaper, as poet, essayist, public teacher, in all ways open to him, are great and evident; few now living in this kingdom, perhaps, could boast of greater.

“4. That his sufferings in that same cause have also been great; legal persecution and penalty (not dishonourable to him, nay, honourable, were the whole truth known, as it will one day be); illegal obloquy and calumny through the Tory press; perhaps a greater amount of baseless, persevering, implacable calumny than any other living writer has undergone. Which long course of hostility (nearly the cruellest conceivable, had it not been carried on in half or almost total misconception) may be regarded as the beginning of his other worst distresses, and a main cause of these down to this day.

“5. That he is heavily laden with domestic burdens, more heavily than most men, and his economical resources are gone from him. For the last twelve years he has toiled continually with passionate diligence, with the cheerfullest spirit, refusing no task, yet hardly able with all this to provide for the day that was passing over him; and now, after some two years of incessant effort in a new enterprise that seemed of good promise, it has suddenly broken down, and he remains in ill health, age creeping on him, without employment, means,

or outlook, in a situation of the painfullest sort. Neither do his distresses, nor did they at any time, arise from wastefulness or the like, on his own part (he is a man of humble wishes, and can live with dignity on little), but from crosses of what is called fortune ; from injustice of other men ; from inexperience of his own, and a guileless trustfulness of nature ; the thing and things that have made him unsuccessful make him in reality *more* loveable, and plead for him in the minds of the candid.

"6. That such a man is rare in a Nation, and of high value there ; not to be procured for a whole Nation's revenue, or recovered when taken from us, and some £200 a-year is the price which this one, whom we now have, is valued at ; with that sum he were lifted above his perplexities, perhaps saved from nameless wretchedness ! It is believed that in hardly any other way could £200 abolish so much suffering, create so much benefit, to one man, and through him to many and all.

"Were these things fitly set before an English minister, in whom great part of England recognizes (with surprise at such a novelty) a man of insight, fidelity, and decision, is it not probable or possible that he, though from a quite opposite point of view, might see them in somewhat of a similar light ; and, so seeing, determine to do in consequence ?
Ut fiat ! T. C."

We have seen that when Emerson talked to Carlyle about the immortality of the soul, Carlyle did not enter with avidity on the subject, having

“the natural disinclination of every nimble spirit to bruise itself against walls.” In 1848, a young lady who had given her mind much to such problems, wrote to him, asking his views as to a future state. We unearth his letter in reply from the columns of an old newspaper. It is dated, “The Grange, Alresford, September 27, 1848—

“MY DEAR MADAM.—The question which perplexes you is one which no man can answer. You may console yourself by reflecting that it is by its nature *insoluble* to human creatures—that what human creatures have to do with such a question, is to get it well put to rest, suppressed if not answered, that so their life and its duties may be attended to without impediment from it. Such questions in this, our earthly existence, are many. ‘There are two things,’ says the German philosopher, ‘that strike me dumb—the starry firmament (*palpably* infinite) and the sense of right and wrong in man.’ Whoever follows out that ‘dumb’ thought will come upon our conceptions of heaven and hell—of an infinitude of merited happiness, and an infinitude of merited woe—and have much to reflect upon under an aspect considerably changed. Consequences good and evil, blessed and accursed, it is very clear, do follow from all our actions here below, and prolong, and propagate, and spread themselves into the infinite or beyond our calculation and conception; but whether the notion of *reward* and *penalty* be not, on the whole, rather a *human* one, transferred to that immense divine fact,

has been doubtful to many. Add this consideration, which the best philosophy teaches us, 'that the very *consequences* (not to speak of the *penalties* at all) of *evil* actions die away, and become abolished long before eternity ends; that it is only the consequences of *good* actions that are *eternal*—for these are in harmony with the laws of this universe, and add themselves to it, and co-operate with it for ever; while all that is in *disharmony* with it must necessarily be without continuance and soon fall dead'—as perhaps, you have heard in the sound of a Scottish Psalm amid the mountains, the true notes alone *support* one another, and the Psalm which was discordant enough near at hand, is a perfect melody when heard from afar. On the whole, I must account it but a morbid, weak imagination that shudders over this wondrous divine universe as a place of despair to any creature; and contrariwise, a most degraded human sense, sunk down to the region of the *brutal* (however common it be) that in any case remains blind to the infinite difference there ever is between right and wrong for a human creature—or God's law and the devil's law.—Yours very truly,

T. CARLYLE."

The dismal forebodings with which the eventful year 1848 affected Carlyle are shown in his letter to Aird in the beginning of this chapter. His matured thoughts on the transactions which took place about that time, are given in the "Latter Day Pamphlets," to which certain articles he contributed to the *Spectator* and *Examiner* in 1848

may be regarded as precursors. In the *Spectator* he wrote on "Ireland and the British Chief Governor" and on "Irish Regiments (of the New Era)" (May 13). His articles in the *Examiner* were—"Louis Philippe" (March 4); "Repeal of the Union" (April 29); "Legislation for Ireland" (May 13); and "Charles Buller" (December 2). The early death of Buller affected with deep sorrow all who knew him. "I was shocked to hear of the death of poor Charles Buller," wrote Macaulay in his diary, "I could almost cry for him." It was Buller's appointment to the Chief Commissionership of the Poor Law Board that developed Carlyle's interest in the pauper question. The brief and bright career of his former pupil had been watched by him with great interest; and he has written few finer things than his touching tribute to his memory in the *Examiner*. It runs as follows:—

"A very beautiful soul has suddenly been summoned from among us; one of the clearest intellects and most aerial activities in England has unexpectedly been called away. Charles Buller died on Wednesday morning last, without previous sickness, reckoned of importance, till a day or two before. An event of unmixed sadness, which has created a just sorrow, private and public. The light of many a social circle is dimmer henceforth, and will miss long a presence which was always gladdening and beneficent; in the coming storms of political trouble, which heap themselves more

and more in ominous clouds in our horizon, one radiant element is to be wanting now.

“ Mr Buller was in his forty-third year, and had sat in Parliament some twenty of these. A man long kept under by the peculiarities of his endowment and position, but rising rapidly into importance of late years ; beginning to reap the fruits of long patience, and to see an ever wider field open round him. He was what, in party language, is called a ‘ Reformer ’ from his earliest youth ; and never swerved from that faith, nor could swerve. His luminous, sincere intellect laid bare to him in all its abject incoherency the thing that was untrue, which henceforth became for him a thing that was not tenable, that it was perilous and scandalous to attempt maintaining. Twenty years in the dreary, weltering lake of parliamentary confusion, with its disappointments and bewilderments, had not quenched this tendency, in which, as we say, he persevered as by a law of nature itself, for the essence of his mind was clearness, healthy purity, incompatibility with fraud in any of its forms. What he accomplished, therefore, whether great or little, was all to be *added* to the sum of good ; none of it to be deducted. There shone mildly in his whole conduct a beautiful veracity, as if it was unconscious of itself ; a perfect spontaneous absence of all cant, hypocrisy, and hollow pretence, not in word or act only, but in thought and instinct. To a singular extent it can be said of him that he was a spontaneous clear man. Very gentle, too, though full of fire ; simple, brave, graceful. What he did, and

what he said, came from him as light from a luminous body, and had thus in it a high and rare merit, which any of the most discerning could appreciate fully.

“To many, for a long while, Mr Buller passed merely for a man of wit, and certainly his beautiful, natural gaiety of character, which by no means meant *levity*, was commonly thought to mean it, and did, for many years, hinder the intrinsic higher qualities. Slowly it began to be discovered that, under all this many-coloured radiancy and corruscation, there burnt a most steady light ; a sound penetrating intellect, full of adroit resources, and loyal by nature itself to all that was methodic, manful, true—in brief, a mildly resolute, chivalrous, and gallant character, capable of doing much serious service.

“A man of wit he indisputably was, whatever more, among the wittiest of men. His speech and manner of being played everywhere like soft brilliancy of lambent fire round the common objects of the hour, and was, beyond all others that English society could show, entitled to the name of excellent, for it was spontaneous, like all else in him, genuine, humane—the glittering play of the soul of a real man. To hear him, the most serious of men might think within himself, ‘How beautiful is human gaiety, too!’ A lover of wit, Buller never made wit ; he could be silent or grave enough when better was going ; often rather liked to be silent if permissible, and always so when needful. His wit, moreover, was ever the ally of wisdom, not

of folly or unkindness or injustice ; no soul was ever hurt by it ; never, we believe, did his wit offend justly any man, and often have we seen his ready resource relieve one ready to be offended, and light up a pausing circle all into harmony again. In truth, it was beautiful to see such clear, almost childlike simplicity of heart co-existing with the finished dexterities and long experiences of a man of the world. Honour to human worth in whatever form we find it ! This man was true to his friends, true to his convictions—and true without effort—as the magnet is to the north. He was ever found on the right side ; helpful to it, not obstructive of it, in all he attempted or performed.

“Weak health ; a faculty indeed brilliant, clear, prompt, not deficient in depth either, or in any kind of active valour, but wanting in the stern energy that could long endure to *continue* in the deep, in the chaotic, new, and painfully incondite—this marked out for him his limits, which, perhaps with regrets enough, his natural veracity and practicality would lead him quietly to admit and stand by. He was not the man to grapple, in its dark and deadly dens, with the Lernean coil of social Hydras ; perhaps not under any circumstances ; but he did, unassisted, what he could ; faithfully himself did something—nay, something truly considerable—and in his *patience* with so much that by him and his strength could not be done, let us grant there was something of beautiful too !

“Properly, indeed, his career as a public man

was but beginning. In the office he last held, much was silently expected of him ; he himself, too, recognised well what a fearful and immense question this of Pauperism is ; with what ominous rapidity the demand for solution of it is pressing on ; and how little the world generally is yet aware what methods and principles, new, strange, and altogether contradictory to the shallow maxims and idle philosophies current at present, would be needed for dealing with it ! This task he, perhaps, contemplated with apprehension ; but he is not now to be tried with this, or with any task more. He has fallen, at this point of the march, an honourable soldier ; and has left us here to fight along without him. Be his memory dear and honourable to us, as that of one so worthy ought. What in him was true and valiant endures for evermore—beyond all memory or record. His light, airy brilliancy has suddenly become solemn, fixed in the eternal stillness of eternity. *There* shall we also, and our little works, all shortly be ! ”

In 1849 was published in *Fraser's Magazine* what to most people seems the most objectionable of all Carlyle's writings—the paper on “ *The Nigger Question.* ” Admirers of Carlyle in abundance will be found to defend his utterances on political questions in “ *Chartism,* ” “ *Past and Present,* ” and the “ *Latter Day Pamphlets,* ” but we are not aware of any voice of consequence that has been raised in favour of his views of the “ *Nigger Question ;* ” though he himself thought the article important enough to deserve reprinting in pamphlet form in

1853. Indeed, to the majority who reverence Carlyle it must be a matter of deep regret that he ever promulgated them; for a more unjust and onesided statement of opinion than "The Nigger Question" was never penned. He pours his scorn upon the idle blacks "sitting yonder with their beautiful muzzles up to the ears in pumpkins, imbibing sweet pulps and juices; the grinder and incisor teeth ready for ever new work, and the pumpkins cheap as grass in these rich climates;" but he has scarcely a word to say against the often inhuman and diabolical cruelty of the slave-holders, on which surely a little of his scorn and indignation might have been well spent. "Mr Carlyle's style," says one of the kindest of critics—Barry Cornwall—"which is at first repulsive, becomes in the end very attractive. His humour, though grave, is not saturnine—some of his graver epithets, indeed, pierce at once to the very heart of a subject. He worships the hero; yet, he is in general thoroughly radical. He loves the poor worker in letters, the peasant, the farmer with his horny hand, the plain speaker, the bold speaker, yet he has no pity for the negro, who, he says, should submit to slavery because he is not fit for freedom. It follows from this that the man must remain poor who has not obvious means to achieve riches, and that oppression and misfortune are reasonable decrees of fate, against which our feelings should not cavil nor rebel."

Immediately following "The Nigger Question" appeared, in February 1850, the first instalment of the "Latter-Day Pamphlets," containing a gloomy

review of "The Present Time." During the next six months appeared the remainder of the fiery diatribes that make up the volume. On "Model Prisons," "Downing Street," "Stump Oratory," "Parliaments," "Hudson's Statue," "Jesuitism," he gave utterance to sentiments of abhorrence and indignation. Nor were his scorn and derision of the existing state of things much softened by good hopes for the future. At some long distant date, indeed, he thinks the moral and political atmosphere may become clearer and brighter, but such a glorious event could not happen speedily. The state of degradation into which men had sunk was so terrible that to rescue them from it was a task too great to be accomplished easily, or in a short time. For about two centuries England had persisted in worshipping lies and shoddies and shams. "It was the kernel of his philosophy that legislation, Reform or Ballot Bills, statutory measures of social improvement of any kind, would do of themselves next to no good. Reforms to be effectual must go deeper than an English Parliament, of whose perfect wisdom he had grave doubts, was likely to tolerate. 'Christian philanthropy and other most amiable looking, but most baseless, and, in the end, most baneful, and all bewildering jargon;' 'philanthropisms,' issuing 'in a universal sluggard and scoundrel protection society;' the crowds of amiable simpletons sunk in 'deep froth oceans of benevolence;' Bentham, a 'bore of the first magnitude,' with his immense baggage of formulæ, and his tedious iteration of 'the greatest happiness of the greatest num-

ber;' the political economists mumbling barren truisms or equally untruthful paradoxes about supply and demand; Malthusians preaching to deaf years the most unacceptable of Gospels; so-called statesmen collecting with impotent hands information about the Condition of England question which they could not apply, and letting things slide to chaos and perdition; Ireland sluttishly starving from age to age on Act of Parliament freedom; the braying of Exeter Hall; the helpless babbling of Parliament; and liberty made a pretext, in the West Indies and elsewhere, for flying in the face of the great law that, if a man work not, neither shall he eat—these were some of the butts of his scorn and contempt."

As was natural, such a terrible jeremiad as the "Latter-Day Pamphlets" met with severe handling from many critics. The first four chapters were made the subject of a very caustic article in *Blackwood's Magazine*. "We have known, ere now," said the critic, who was probably Aytoun, "in England, political writers, who, single-handed, have waged war with ministers, and denounced the methods of government. But these were men of strong, masculine understanding, capable of comprehending principles, and of exhibiting them in detail. They never attempted to write upon subjects which they did not understand, consequently what they did write was well worthy of perusal, more especially as their sentiments were conveyed in clear idiomatic English. Perhaps the most remarkable man of this class was the late William Cobbet. Shrewd and

practical, a master of figures, and an utter scorner of generalization, he went at once, in whatever he undertook, to the root of the matter, and, right or wrong, demonstrated what he thought to be the evil, and what he conceived to be the remedy. There was no slip-slop burlesque, or indistinctness about William Cobbet. Mr Carlyle, on the other hand, can never stir one inch beyond the vaguest generality. If he were a doctor, and you came to him with a cut finger, he would regale you with a lecture on the heroical qualities of Avicenna, or commence proving that Abernethy was merely a Phantasm Leech, instead of whipping out his pocket-book and applying a plaster to the wound. Put him into the House of Commons, and ask him to make a speech on the budget. No baby ever possessed a more indefinite idea of the difference between pounds, shillings, and pence. He would go on maundering about Teufelsdröckh, Sauertieg, and Dryasdust, Sir Jabez Windbag, Fire-Horses, Marsh-Jotuns, and vulturous Choctaws, until he was coughed down as remorselessly as ever was Sir Joshua Walmsley. And yet this is the gentleman who has the temerity to volunteer his services as a public instructor, and who is now issuing a series of monthly tracts, for the purpose of shedding a new light upon the most intricate and knotty points of the general policy of Great Britain!" Carlyle's style comes in for a due share of the critic's objurgation—"As to his style it can be defended on no principle whatever. Richter, who used to be his model, was in reality a first-rate master of language and of verbal

music; and although in some of his works, he thought fit to adopt a quaint and abrupt manner of writing, in others he exhibited not only great power, but a harmony which is perhaps the rarest accomplishment of the rhetorical artist. His 'Meditation on a Field of Battle,' for example, is as perfect a strain of music as the best composition of Beethoven. But in Mr Carlyle's sentences and periods, there is no touch or sound of harmony. They are harsh, cramped, and often ungrammatical; totally devoid of all pretension to ease, delicacy, or grace. In short, we pass from the 'Latter-Day Pamphlets' with the sincere conviction that the author, as a politician, is shallow and unsound, obscure and fantastic in his philosophy, and very much to be reprehended for his obstinate attempt to inculcate a bad style, and to deteriorate the simple beauty and pure significancy of our language."*

Severe as the above criticism is, probably it is not more severe than the reflections which have arisen in the minds of many worthy Britons after the perusal of the "Latter-Day Pamphlets." With the English love of the practical, they have sought for the remedies Mr Carlyle proposes for the evils he deplores, and have sought in vain. "You've shown or you've made another hole in the tin kettle of society;" said De Quincey to Carlyle; "how do you propose to tinker it!" To this important question, the answers are meagre and vague. Emigration and education are almost the

Blackwood's Magazine, June 1850.

only remedies suggested. The sum and substance of the "Latter-Day Pamphlets" may be said to be this: Put not your trust in parliaments elected by popular suffrage. From them you will not get able government. You will only get plenty of frothy talk, one of the greatest abominations under the sun. At many times, and in divers manners has Carlyle lifted up his voice against talkers and orators. "Ah, sir," he once said to Milburn, "the days in which our lot is cast are few and evil. All virtue and belief and courage seem to have run to tongue; and he is the wisest man and the most valiant, who is the greatest Talker. The world has transformed itself into a Parliament, an assemblage whose prime and almost only business is to talk, talk, talk, until the very heavens themselves must have become deaf with this ceaseless vociferation. Our British nation occupies a sad pre-eminence in this matter. Demagogy, blustering, vainglorious, hollow, far-sounding, unmeaning talk, seems to be its great distinction. On earth, I think, is not its fellow to be found, except, sir, in your own demagogic and oratorical nation. I am certainly afraid that modern popular oratory will be the ruin of the race; and that the verdict of the jury that shall sit upon the corpse of our civilization will be, 'Suicide by an over-dose of oratory.'"

As good a criticism on much of the "Latter Day Pamphlets" as would be given is contained in the following sentence from Carlyle's review of the "Corn-Law Rhymes"—"At the same time, we could

truly wish to see such a mind as his engaged rather in considering what, in his own sphere, could be *done*, than what, in his own or other spheres, ought to be *destroyed*; rather in producing or preserving the True, than in mangling or destroying the False." In them, in short, he too often forgets that, "'Tis better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill." Nevertheless the "Latter Day Pamphlets" contain much valuable matter that has now become the common property of all educated men. As has been said by a writer in the *Times* (February 7, 1881), the novelties and paradoxes of 1850 are, to a large extent, nothing but the good sense of 1881. "Who would not now echo Mr Carlyle's protests against the supposed omnipotence of Parliament, or of the possibility of saving nations by the use of the ballot box? Who now believes that men can be instantaneously reformed in battalions or platoons, or that human nature can be remade by any order of the Poor Law Commissioners? Who does not own that the change in our colonies from servitude to idleness and squalor, temporary, it is true, was not an unmixed blessing to those most concerned? If all wise men are now haunted by a sense of the impotence of legislation to effect deep changes for good, to whom do they owe this so much as to Mr Carlyle? Who recognised the duty of spreading education earlier and more clearly than he? We say nothing of the keen eye for the detection of rogues and impostors, under all disguises, which Mr Carlyle's political pamphlets reveal; or of those ingenious epithets of

his which, attached to some blustering, swelling price of fraud, acted like a stone tied to the neck of a dog flung into deep water. It is enough to say that, again and again, he reminded, in his own way, his generation of stern truths which it was in danger of forgetting."

Of admirers and students of Carlyle at this period none was more ardent than Charles Kingsley, to whose novel, "*Alton Lock*," Carlyle's political writings supply a very adequate commentary. On his sending a copy of it to Carlyle he replied (October 31, 1850):—

"Apart from your treatment of my own poor self (on which subject let me not venture to speak at all), I found plenty to like and be grateful for in the book : abundance, nay exuberance of generous zeal ; headlong impetuosity of determination towards the manful side on all manner of questions ; snatches of excellent poetical description, occasional sunbursts of noble insight ; everywhere a certain wild intensity, which holds the reader fast as by a spell ; these surely are good qualities, and pregnant omens in a man of your seniority in the regiment. At the same time, I am bound to say, the book is definable as *crude*, by no manner of means the best we expect of you—if you will resolutely temper your fire. But to make the malt sweet, the fire should and must be slow ; so says the proverb, and now, as before, I include all duties for you under that one ! 'Saunders Mackay,' my invaluable countryman in this book, is really perfect ; indeed, I greatly wonder how you did con-

trive to manage him—his very dialect is as if a native had done it, and the whole existence of the rugged old hero is a wonderfully splendid and coherent piece of Scottish bravura. In both of your women, too, I find some grand poetic features; but neither of them is worked out into the ‘Daughter of the Sun’ she might have been; indeed, nothing is worked out anywhere in comparison with ‘Saunders,’ and the impression is of a fervid creation still left half chaotic. That is my literary verdict, both the black of it and the white.

“Of the grand social and moral questions we will say nothing whatever at present; any time within the next two centuries, it is like, there will be enough to say about them! On the whole, you will have to persist; like a cannon ball that is shot, you will have to go to your mark whatever it be. I stipulate further, that you come and see me when you are at Chelsea, and that you pay no attention at all to the foolish clamour of reviewers, whether laudatory or condemnatory.”

LIFE OF STERLING

CHAPTER VI.

LIFE OF STERLING.

IN 1850 Leigh Hunt gave to the world his Autobiography, an amusing and characteristic book, more egotistic than even autobiographies generally are, and, it must be confessed, containing passages that forcibly recall Harold Skimpole to one's recollection. Carlyle comes under review in Hunt's description of his life at Chelsea, and while his good qualities are duly noted, the points in his character which Hunt objected to are not passed over. "Here, also," he writes, "I became acquainted with Thomas Carlyle, one of the kindest and best, as well as most eloquent of men; though, in his zeal for what is best, he sometimes thinks it incumbent on him to take not the kindest tone, and, in his eloquent demands of some hearty uncompromising creed on our parts, he does not quite set the example of telling us the amount of his own. Mr Carlyle sees that there is a great deal of rough work in the operations of nature; he seems to think himself bound to consider a good deal of it devilish, after the old covenanter fashion, in order that he may find something angelical in giving it the proper quantity of vituperation and blows; and he calls

upon us to prove our energies and our benevolence by acting the part of the wind rather than the sun, of warring rather than peace-making, of frightening and forcing rather than conciliating and persuading. . . . Mr Carlyle's antipathy to 'shams' is highly estimable and salutary. I wish Heaven may prosper his denouncements of them wherever they exist. But the danger of the habit of denouncing—of looking at things from the antipathetic instead of the sympathetic side—is, that a man gets such a love for the pleasure and exaltation of fault-finding, as tempts him, in spite of himself, to make what he finds; until, at length, he is himself charged with being a 'sham,' that is to say, a pretender to perceptions and virtues which he does not prove, or, at best, a willing confounder of what differs from modes and appearances of his own, with violation of intrinsical wisdom and goodness. Upon this principle of judgment, nature herself and the universe might be found fault with; and the sun and the stars denounced for appearing no bigger than they do, or for not confining the measures of their operation to that of the taper we read by. Mr Carlyle adopted a peculiar semi-German style, from the desire of putting thoughts on his paper instead of words, and perhaps of saving himself some trouble in the process. I feel certain that he does it from no other motive; and I am sure he has a right to help himself to every diminution of trouble, seeing how many thoughts and feelings he undergoes. He also strikes an additional blow with the peculiarity, rouses men's attention by it, and helps his rare and

powerful understanding to produce double its effect. It would be hard not to dispense with a few verbs and nominative cases, in consideration of so great a result. Yet, if one were to judge him by one of his own summary processes, and deny him the benefit of his notions of what is expedient and advisable, how could he exculpate his style, in which he denounces so many 'shams,' of being itself a sham? of being affected, unnecessary, and ostentatious? a jargon got up to confound pretension with performance, and reproduce endless German talk under the guise of novelty?

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"It has been well said, that love money as people may, there is generally something which they love better: some whim or hobby-horse; some enjoyment or avocation; some personal, or political, or poetical predilection; some good opinion of this or that class of men; some club of one's fellows, or dictum of one's own;—with a thousand other *somes* and probabilities. I believe that what Mr Carlyle loves better than his fault-finding, with all its eloquence, is the face of any human creature that looks loving, and suffering, and sincere; and I believe further, that if the fellow-creature were suffering only, and neither loving nor sincere, but had come to a pass of agony in this life, which put him at the mercies of some good man for some last help and consolation towards his grave, even at the risk of loss to repute, and a sure amount of pain and vexation, that man, if the groan reached him in its forlornness, would be Thomas Carlyle."

The "Autobiography" was read by Carlyle with warm approval. "I have just finished your autobiography," he writes, "which has been most pleasantly occupying all my leisure these three days; and you must permit me to write you a word upon it, out of the fulness of the heart, while the impulse is still fresh to thank you. This good book, in every sense one of the best I have read this long while, has awakened many old thoughts which never were extinct, or even properly asleep, but which (like so much else) have had to fall silent amid the tempests of an evil time—Heaven mend it! A word from me once more, I know, will not be unwelcome, while the world is talking of you.

"Well, I call this an excellent good book, by far the best of the autobiographic kind I remember to have read in the English language; and, indeed, except it be Boswell's of Johnson, I do not know where we have such a picture drawn of a human life, as in these three volumes.

"A pious, ingenuous, altogether human and worthy book; imaging, with graceful honesty and free felicity, many interesting objects and persons on your life-path, and imaging throughout, what is best of all, a gifted, gentle, patient, and valiant human soul, as it buffets its way through the billows of time, and will not drown though often in danger; cannot *be* drowned, but conquers and leaves a track of radiance behind it; that, I think, comes out more clearly to me than in any other of your books; and that, I can venture to assure you, is the best of all results to readers in a book of

written record. In fact, this book has been like a written exercise of devotion to me; I have not assisted at any sermon, liturgy, or litany, this long while, that has had so religious an effect on me. Thanks, in the name of all men. And believe, along with me, that the book will be welcome to other generations as well as ours. And long may you live to write more books for us; and may the evening sun be softer on you (and on me) than the noon sometimes was!

“Adieu, dear Hunt (you must let me use this familiarity, for I am now an old fellow too, as well as you). I have often thought of coming up to see you once more; and, perhaps, I shall, one of these days (though there are such lions in the path, go whitherward one may), but, whether I do or not, believe for ever in my regard.”

In 1851, Carlyle published his “Life of Sterling”—unquestionably the most charming biography of its size in the language. It was the singular fortune of Sterling, a young man of fine character, and of considerable, though by no means extraordinary talents, to have his memory preserved in two biographies, one of which, at least, will perpetuate it for several generations yet to come. He died in 1844, at the early age of thirty-eight, having accomplished little—less than he might have done had not many of his days been passed in sickness and in pain. The most notable feature about him seems to have been the extraordinary openness and receptivity of his nature, which enabled him to form close friendships with men of the most various dis-

positions and faculties. So large was his circle of acquaintances that almost every eminent man of his time was included in it. John Stuart Mill, Mr Gladstone, Professor Wilson, Charles and Julius Hare, George Cornwall Lewes, Thomas Carlyle, all belonged to it, as well as a host of others. Nothing can better show the catholicity of his friendships than that he chose two men in many ways so opposite as Carlyle and Archdeacon Hare to be his literary executors. Between these two, it was agreed that to Archdeacon Hare, should be entrusted the task of selecting what writings of Sterling's ought to be reprinted, and of drawing up a biography to introduce them. By him this was accordingly done in 1848, "in a manner," says Carlyle, "surely far superior to the common, in every good quality of editing; and visibly everywhere bearing testimony to the friendliness, the piety, perspicacity, and other gifts and virtues of that eminent and amiable man."

Nevertheless, Carlyle was far from being satisfied with the worthy Archdeacon's somewhat priggish biography. He had not been at all clear that Sterling should have a biography of any sort; but he *was* clear that, since one of him was to be written, it should contain a true representation and not a misrepresentation of him. And, in Carlyle's opinion, the Archdeacon's biography was essentially a misrepresentation. A churchman himself, he had devoted great space to Sterling's relations to the Church, neglecting or passing over the other aspects of his life. This, said Carlyle, is too bad. Let a

man be honestly forgotten when his life ends ; but let him not be misrepresented in this way. "To be hung-up as an ecclesiastical scarecrow, as a target for heterodox and orthodox to practise archery upon, is no fate that can be due to the memory of Sterling. It was not as a ghastly phantasm, choked in Thirty-nine-article controversies, or miserable Semitic, anti-Semitic, street riots in scepticisms, agonised self-seekings, that this man appeared in life ; nor as such, if the world still wishes to look at him, should you suffer the world's memory of him now to be. Once for all, it is unjust ; emphatically untrue as an image of John Sterling ; perhaps to few men that lived along with him could such an interpretation of their existence be more inapplicable."

Influenced mainly by this consideration, Carlyle determined to write the life of Sterling himself. The result may be compendiously described as the life of a superior Boswell by a superior Johnson—a Johnson not without somewhat of his prototype's arrogance and confidence in the rectitude of his own opinions. It is very striking to notice the difference in tone between the "*Life of Schiller*" and the "*Life of Sterling*." In the former, Carlyle writes very modestly—as one whose powers had not yet been recognised by the world, and who had not yet learned to feel confidence in them himself. In the latter, he writes with strong self-confidence, occasionally even in a supercilious tone, as one who felt sure of his own abilities and his own position. His half-humorous appreciation of Sterling's

character, and the many miniature portraits of other men incidentally introduced, make the book a masterpiece of biography. Even Carlyle has written nothing finer than his exquisite description of Coleridge ; while for graphic power his account of Captain Sterling remains unsurpassed. The great secret of Carlyle's success as an historian and biographer was his piercing insight into character. Occasionally, by a single epithet, he would describe a man to the life. He was once asked what he thought of a new acquaintance whom he had only seen for a few minutes. "I should call him a willowy sort of man," he replied—an epithet which was considered unspeakably felicitous by those acquainted with the individual in question. A very small indication often sufficed to lead him to a conclusion. On one occasion he denounced as a scoundrel a man of business who, at the time, was in the best repute, but who shortly afterwards turned out to deserve all that had been said against him. "How," he was asked, "did you find him out, Mr Carlyle?" "Oh," said he, "I saw rogue in the twist of the false hip of him as he went out at the door."*

The life of Sterling well indicates the great personal influence Carlyle exercised over all with whom he came in contact. When Sterling first formed his acquaintance there were probably more differences of opinion than resemblances between them—he did not coincide with Carlyle's view of the present position of the Church, or of the

* *St James's Gazette*, February 5, 1881.

intellect of Goethe, or of the character of Cromwell. Before his death, however, on all these points he had been drawn into closer agreement with Carlyle, and acknowledged to him a deep debt of gratitude. In one of the last letters he wrote to him—a letter, says Carlyle, fit to be for ever memorable to the receiver of it—he said, “With regard to you and me I cannot begin to write; having nothing for it but to keep shut the lids of those secrets with all the iron weights that are in my power. Towards me it is still more true than towards England, that no man has been and done like you. Heaven bless you! If I can lend a hand when THERE, that will not be wanting. It is all very strange, but not one hundredth part so strange as it seems to the passers by.” It is probable that since the time of Dr Johnson there has lived no one of so impressive and vigorous a personality as Carlyle. His own deep conviction that what he said was true, made his words carry with them a weight that belonged to the words of no other; and their force was added to by his striking appearance and earnest utterance.

Readers of the “Life of Sterling” cannot fail to recollect Carlyle’s frequent exhortations, that Sterling should use prose and not verse as the medium for communicating his thoughts. “Beyond all ages,” he said, “our age admonishes whatsoever thinking or writing man it has: O, speak to me some wise intelligible speech; your wise meaning in the shortest and clearest way; behold, I am dying for want of wise meaning, and insight into the de-

vouring fact ; speak, if you have any wisdom ! As to song so called, and your fiddling talent—even if you have one, much more if you have none—we will talk of that a couple of centuries hence, when things are calmer again. Homer shall be then welcome ; but only when Troy is taken : alas, while the siege lasts, and battle's fury rages everywhere, what can I do with the Homer ? I want Achilles and Odysseus, and am enraged to see them trying to be Homers." This opinion was no new one with Carlyle. In 1832 he had advised the "Corn-Law Rhymers" to consider "Whether Rhyme is the only dialect he can write in ; whether Rhyme is, after all, the natural or fittest dialect for him ? In good Prose, which differs inconceivably from bad Prose, what may not be written, what may not be read ; from a Waverley Novel to an Arabic Koran, to an English Bible." To all poets who sent him their productions or asked his advice, his constant injunction was, "Write in prose." "Young men who ask my advice," he wrote in 1844 to Ebenezer Jones, a young verse-maker, "in these times, I generally counsel *not* to write in rhyme and metre ; but to try rather whether they can be 'poetic' on a basis of fact and sincere reality, this great universe being full of such ; for indeed all poetic forms are at present quite fallen into discredit, as they well deserved to do ; and veracity, not fiction, was and is the business of all human souls, the highest as well as the lowest. But, on the whole, forms go for little ; it is the substance only that goes for much. Sound sense,

human energy, and intelligence shall be welcome to us, in rhyme or not in rhyme." In much the same strain he wrote to Thomas Aird in 1848—"I have received your volume of poems : many thanks to you for so kind and worthy a gift, and for the kind and excellent letter which came to me the day after. I have already made considerable inroads into the 'Tragedy' and other pieces. I find everywhere a healthy breath as of mountain breezes : a native manliness, veracity, and geniality which, though the poetic form, as you may know, is less acceptable to me in these sad times than the plain prose one, is for ever welcome in all forms, and is withal so rare just now, as to be doubly and trebly precious. But your delineations of reality and fact are so fresh, clear, and genuine, when I have met you in that field, that I always grudge to see such a man employ himself in fiction and imagination, when the 'reality,' however real, has to suffer so many abatements before it can come to me. Reality, very ugly and ungainly often, is nevertheless, as I say always, *God's* unwritten poem ; which it needs precisely that a human genius should write and make *intelligible* (for it would then be beautiful, divine, and have all high and highest qualities) to his less gifted brothers ! But what then ? Gold is golden, howsoever you coin it : into what filigree soever you twist it. I know gold when I see it, one may hope. For the rest, 'a wilful man must have his way !' And indeed I know very well I am in a minority of one with this precious literary creed of mine, so cannot quarrel

with your faith and practice in that respect. Long may you live to employ those fine gifts in the way your own conscience and best deliberated insight suggests!" To Thomas Cooper the Chartist, in acknowledging his "Purgatory of Suicides," he wrote—"We have too horrible a Practical Chaos round us; out of which every man is called by the birth of him to make a bit of *Cosmos*; that seems to me the real poem for a man, especially at present. I always grudge to see any portion of a man's *musical talent* (which is the real intellect, the real vitality or life of him) expended on making mere *words rhyme*." Perhaps a little of Carlyle's dislike to "fiction" was derived from his father, who held anything fictitious in utter abhorrence. It was only by stealth that, in his young days, Carlyle could devour novels, some of which he read with great interest. "I remember," he once said, "few happier days than when I ran off into the fields to read 'Roderick Random,' and how inconsolable I was that I could not get the second volume. To this day I think few writers equal to Smollett."

Carlyle's own few original poems and his verse-translations scattered through his Essays, show that with many of the qualities which go to make a great poet, he had no "ear" for verse. His rhythm in many cases is conspicuously bad. Nevertheless, one or two of his lyrics, for example that entitled "Adieu" (said to have had its origin in an early unfortunate love affair which is recorded in the "Blumine" episode of "Sartor Re-

sartus”), and “The Song of the Sower,” are very beautiful, while his translations of Luther’s “Psalm” and Goethe’s “Mason Lodge,” must be pronounced supremely excellent. He occasionally condescended to write trifles for the albums of friends, one or two of which have seen the light. The following new version of an old song, written on a small scrap of note paper, was sold in 1872 at the sale of the library of the late Rev. Thomas Alexander, for twenty years Presbyterian minister at Chelsea, who enjoyed for many years an intimate friendship with his illustrious countryman. The verses, presented to “Rev. T. Alexander, with many regards,” run thus :—

“There was a piper had a cow,
And he had nocht to give her ;
He took his pipes and play’d a spring,
And bade the cow consider.
The cow considered wi’ hersel’,
That mirth wad never fill her ;
‘Gie me a pickle ait strae,
And sell your wind for siller.’”

CHELSEA, 3d Feb. 1870.

T. CARLYLE.

Another specimen of Carlyle’s “nonsense verses” was facsimiled in the *Autographic Mirror* :—

“Simon Brodie had a cow,
He lost his cow, and he couldna find her,
When he had done what man could do,
The cow cam’ hame, and her tail behind her.”

CHELSEA, 25th Jan. 1849.

T. CARLYLE.

The year 1853 was saddened to Carlyle by the

death of his mother ; upon whose many virtues he is said to have been fond of dwelling. She was, he thought, "entirely too peaceable and pious for this world," and he deplored some sad results of her enjoining non-resistance upon him at school. Though most of the subjects upon which her son wrote were new to her, she read his works with great care, and particularly, she read and re-read his "History of the French Revolution." She was at first somewhat disturbed by the new religious views she met with in her son's books, but when she found he was earnest and steadfast, she cared for no more.* Carlyle's father died in 1832. "The hand of death," he writes to Napier, in a letter dated, "London, February 6, 1832," "has been busy in my circle, as I learn it has been in yours ; painfully reminding us that, 'here we have no continuing city.' The venerated Friend that bade me farewell, cannot welcome me when I come back. I have now no Father in this land of shadows."

In 1856, Carlyle addressed an interesting letter to Sir William Napier, on his record of Sir Charles Napier's administration of Scinde:—

"DEAR SIR,—I have read with attention, and with many feelings and reflections, your record of Sir C. Napier's administration of Scinde. You must permit me to thank you, in the name of Britain at large, for writing such a book ; and in my own poor name to acknowledge the great com-

* *Daily News*, February 7, 1881.

pliment and kindness implied in sending me a copy for myself.

“It is a book which every living Englishman would be the better for reading—for studying diligently till he saw into it, till he recognised and believed the high and tragic phenomenon set forth there. A book that may be called ‘profitable’ in the old scripture sense; profitable for reproof, for correction and admonition, for great sorrow, yet for building up in righteousness too, in heroic, manful endeavour to do well, and not ill, in one’s time and place. One feels it a kind of possession to know that one had such a fellow-citizen and contemporary in these evil days.

“The fine and subtle qualities of the man are very recognisable to me; his subtle piercing intellect, turned all to the practical, giving him just insight into men and into things; his inexhaustible heroic contrivances; his fiery valour, sharp promptitude to seize the good moment that will never return. A lynx-eyed, fiery man, with the spirit of an old knight in him; more of a hero than any modern I have seen for a long time.

“A singular veracity one finds in him; not in his words alone—which, however, I like much for their fine rough naïvete—but in his actions, judgments, aims; in all that he thinks, and does, and says—which, indeed, I have observed is the root of all greatness or real worth in human creatures, and properly the first (and also the rarest) attribute of what we call *genius* among men.

“The path of such a man through the foul jungle

of this world—the struggle of Heaven's inspiration against the terrestrial fooleries, cupidities, and cowardices—cannot be other than tragical: but the man does tear out a bit of way for himself too; strives towards the good goal, inflexibly persistent till his long rest come; the man does leave his mark behind him, ineffaceable, beneficent to all good men, maleficent to none: and we must not complain. The British nation of this time, in India or elsewhere—God knows, no nation ever had more need of such men, in every region of its affairs! But also, perhaps, no nation ever had a much worse chance to get hold of them, to recognise and loyally second them, even when they are there.

“Anarchic stupidity is wide as the night; victorious wisdom is but as a lamp in it shining here and there. Contrast a Napier even in Scinde with, for example, a Lally at Pondicherry or on the Place de Grève, one has to admit that it is the common lot, that it might have been far worse!

“There is great talent in the book apart from its subject. The narrative moves on with strong, weighty step, like a marching phalanx, with the gleam of clear steel in it, shears down the opponent objects, and tramples them out of sight in a very potent manner. The writer, it is evident, had in him a lively, glowing image, complete in all its parts, of the transaction to be told; and that is his grand secret of giving the reader so lively a conception of it. I was surprised to find how much I had carried away with me, even of the Hill campaign and of Trukke itself, though without a map

attempt to understand such a thing seemed at first to me desperate.

“With many thanks, and gratified to have made this reflex acquaintance, which, if it should ever chance to become a direct one, might gratify me still more, I remain always yours sincerely,

“T. CARLYLE.”

FREDERICK THE GREAT.

CHAPTER VII.

FREDERICK THE GREAT.

AFTER the publication of the "Life of Sterling," Carlyle set himself to the preparation of his longest, his most laborious, and (in the opinion of some, by no means of all) his greatest work, the "History of Friedrich II. of Prussia, called Frederick the Great." The amount of labour he went through while engaged on it was almost fabulous. For nearly fifteen years, he seemed to be entirely possessed by the man about whom he was writing. He had a special study, containing some two thousand volumes more or less connected with the subject, prepared at the top of the house. The walls of the room not occupied by books were covered with pictures representing Frederick or his battles. He would spend weeks in ascertaining some obscure fact or date which would throw light on his hero's history. He visited Germany in order that he might see with his own eyes certain scenes and antiquities pertaining to his subject. To his friends he often declared that he entered upon this work from a sense that it was a task which called him, and that he would hardly have undertaken it had he known the difficulties by which it was surrounded. Occasionally he was not without doubts that his labour

might have been directed into some more profitable channel. When he visited Varnhagen von Ense in 1858, he told his host, that "Frederick" was "the poorest, most troublesome, and arduous piece of work he had ever undertaken." "No satisfaction in it at all," he added, "only labour and sorrow. What the devil had I to do with your Frederick?"

Of this laborious work, the two first volumes appeared in 1858. They were received with a mingled chorus of praise and censure, the latter predominating. "In no previous work," said a clever but by no means very profound critic,* "is his determination to obtrude his own personality more uncompromising than in his History of Frederick. His quips and cranks and wanton wiles begin with the first page and continue in endless succession, sometimes monotonous, sometimes highly diversified, till the last." "Mr Carlyle," said the writer of an able article in the *Quarterly Review* (April 1859), "has traversed eight hundred years of German annals, and has shown in flashes an acquaintance with his subject which has astonished the most learned of the Teutons themselves. It is not likely that the same task will be speedily undertaken again, and we cannot help deploring that such an opportunity has been lost for throwing a steady light, in the shape of a good English history, upon the Germanic centuries through which Mr Carlyle has taken his glancing and irregular flight. A vast deal more valuable matter might surely have been sifted out, and been rescued from

* *Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1859.

the 'dust bins of creation,' to which Mr Carlyle has, with groanings and despair, returned so much of the contents of his sieve." Despite the adverse verdict of many critics the book sold well, and a second edition was speedily called for.

In these two volumes, Carlyle's dislike of Napoleon I., which crops up incidentally in many of his works, appears very markedly. "So soon," he says in one place, "as the Drawcansir equipments are well-torn off, and the shilling gallery got to silence, it will be found that there were great kings before Napoleon—and likewise an art of war, grounded on veracity and human courage and insight, not upon Drawcansir, rodomontade, grandiose Dick-Turpinism, revolutionary madness and unlimited expenditure of men and gunpowder! 'You may paint with a very big brush, and yet not be a great painter,' says a satirical friend of mine! This is becoming more and more apparent, as the dust whirlwind, and huge uproar of the last generation, gradually dies away again." Napoleon III. he regarded with no more favour than his namesake, and with a great deal more contempt. "Your pamphlet on Napoleon has never come," he wrote to Sir George Sinclair in 1863. "I am happy to agree entirely in what you say about that renowned Corsican gentleman ('Play-actor Pirate,' who, after all, found dishonesty *not* to be the best policy), and about his Sham Synonym of the present time, whom I still more heartily dissent from, and even take the liberty of despising." "Did you ever happen to see Louis Napoleon while he lived in

London?" Milburn asked him on one occasion. To which Carlyle thus made answer:—"Oh, yes, I chanced to meet him a few times at the houses of people who were accustomed to give dinners here; and I thought that there was even then something lurking in him of the blood of the old Napoleon, who was, as I read it, the great Highwayman of history; his habit being to clutch King or Kaiser by the throat, and swear by the Eternal, 'If you don't stand and deliver instantly, I'll blow your brains out.' A profitable trade he did at this sort of thing, until another man—Arthur, Duke of Wellington, by name—succeeded in clutching *him* and there was an end of him.

"This Louis Napoleon, as he is called, used to talk to me about the Spirit of the Age, the Democratic Spirit, and the Progress of the Species; but, for my own part, it seemed that the only Progress the Species was making was backward, and that the Spirit of the Age was leading the people downward; and we discovered that we didn't understand each other's language; that we had no key in common for our dialects. And we parted asunder—as, mayhap, did Abraham and Lot—each going his several ways. It looks to me very much as if his way led him to Sodom.

"After that, I used to see him in this neighbourhood (I think he had lodgings in this part of the town) with his hands folded across his breast, and his eyes fixed with a melancholy stare upon the ground, and he looked to me like a poor opera-singer in search of an engagement. God knows

he has succeeded in finding an engagement upon a stage sufficiently vast, before an audience ample enough for any man, and the whole thing got up regardless of expense. But I certainly expect that the day will come when the blue sulphurous flames will dart from behind the scenes and consume the pile with all that are in it; or that the edifice will give way in a crash of ruin, and the whole—singer, audience, and all—sink into the nethermost depths of uttermost perdition, where, it seems to me, they certainly belong.” The fact that this prophecy was made about 1860 says something for Carlyle’s political sagacity.

While busily engaged on “Frederick,” Carlyle, in 1860, received a genial invitation from the ever-hospitable Sir George Sinclair, to come and recruit his exhausted energies at Thurso Castle. He replied (July 24, 1860) that there was something so truly hospitable in the tone of Sir George’s letter, something so human-looking and salutary in the adventure proposed him, that he had decided to attempt it; and would accordingly embark in the Aberdeen steamer in the beginning of August, “sea voyaging being much more supportable at all times than the horrors of railwaying, vainly attempting to sleep at inns, &c., &c.” “Most likely,” he goes on to say, “I shall write again before sailing; in the meantime I have only to bid you thank the beneficent Lady in my name, and say I have good hope her angelic intentions will succeed upon me in some measure, and thus it will be a welcome help indeed. That, for the rest, my domestic habits

are all for simplicity and composure (*simplex munditiis*, the motto in all things) that I live with clear preference where possible on rustic farm produce—‘milk and meal,’ eggs, chickens, moor-mutton; white fish (salmon, veal, lamb, three things tabooed to me); reckon an innocent bread pudding the very acme of culinary art; am accustomed to say, ‘Can all the Udes in Nature, with all the king’s treasures to back them, *make* anything *so good* as good cream?’—and, likewise, that ‘the cow is the friend of man, and the French cook his enemy,’ and not one day in ten drink beyond a single glass of wine. Sufficient on that head. For company I want none but yours and hers:—the great song of the everlasting sea, amid the silences of earth and sky, will be better ‘conversation’ to me than the kind I have long had.”

On July 31, he writes to inform Sir George that all his preparations for departure are completed. “You need not think me quite an *invalid* after all,” he says. “My sleeping faculty has returned, or is evidently returning, to the old imperfect degree;—but my work, but my head! In short, I was seldom in my life more worn out to utter weariness, or had more need of lying down under hopeful conditions.” In due course he arrived safely at Thurso Castle. On Sir George Sinclair informing Mrs Carlyle of his arrival, she sent him the following lively letter, which, as epistles from her pen are very seldom to be met with, we may quote entire:—

“MY DEAR SIR,—Decidedly you are more

thoughtful for me than the man who is bound by vow to 'love and cherish' me; not a line have I received from him to announce his safe arrival in your dominions.

"The more shameful on his part, that, as it appears by your note, he had such good accounts to give of himself, and was perfectly *up to* giving them.

"Well, now that *you* have relieved me from all anxiety about the effects of the journey on him, he may write at his own 'reasonable good leisure.' Only I told him I should not write till I had heard of his arrival from himself; and he knows whether or no I am in the habit of keeping my word—to the letter.

"A thousand thanks for the primrose roots, which I shall plant so soon as it fairs! To-day we have again a deluge, adding a deeper shade of horror to certain household operations going on under my inspection (by way of 'improving the occasion of *his* absence!') *One* bedroom has got all the feathers out of its bed and pillows, airing themselves out on the floor! creating an atmosphere of down in the house, more shocking than even 'cotton fuzz.' In another, upholsterers and painters are plashing away for their life; and a couple of bricklayers are tearing up flags in the kitchen, to seek 'the solution' of a non-acting drain! All this on the one hand, and on the other visits from my doctor, resulting in ever new 'composing draughts,' and strict charges to 'keep my mind perfectly tranquil.' You will admit that one could easily conceive situations more ideal.

"Pray do keep him as long as you like. To hear of him in 'high spirits' and 'looking remarkably well,' is more composing for me than any amount of 'composing draughts,' or of 'insisting on the benefits of keeping myself perfectly tranquil.' It is so very different a state of things with him from that in which I have seen him for a long time back.

"Oh! I must not forget to give you the 'kind remembrances' of a very charming woman, whom any man may be pleased to be remembered by, as kindly as *she* evidently remembered *you*. I speak of Lady William Russell. She knew you in Germany, 'a young student' she told me, when she was *Bessie Rawdon*. She had a great affection for you, and had often thought of you since. You were 'very romantic in those days; oh, *very* romantic and *sentimental*,' she could assure me! Pray send me back a pretty message for her; she will like so much to know that she has not remembered you 'with the reciprocity all on one side.' I don't even send my regards to Mr C., but affectionately yours,
JANE W. CARLYLE."

At Thurso Castle Carlyle remained five weeks, after which he returned to Chelsea, "there to get upon the tread-mill again, sinner that I am." His health at the time seems to have been in a very shattered state. From "Scotsbrig, Ecclefechan," he wrote to Sir George (13th September 1860), "I arrived here, at my halfway house, the night before last, without accident to speak of: indeed, with

what may be called 'a pleasant voyage' both by sea and land, if any such could now be pleasant : nevertheless, I feel considerably smashed ; and, for the present, at least, twenty per cent. below what you and Thurso Castle delivered me at, that morning, in Scrabster Roads. Alas, one has to voyage ; and there is no wishing-carpet or Fortunatus' hat to do it with in these modern steam-days !" *

In 1861 a notable occurrence for a moment diverted Carlyle's attention from "Frederick." The heroism displayed by Inspector Braidwood, who lost his life in the discharge of his duty during a great fire, drew from him the following letter, which appeared in the *Times* of July 2, 1861 :—

SIR,—There is a great deal of public sympathy, and of deeper sort than usual, awake at present on the subject of Inspector Braidwood. It is a beautiful emotion, and apparently a perfectly just one, and well bestowed. Judging by whatever light one gets, Braidwood seems to have been a man of singular worth in his department, and otherwise ; such a servant as the public seldom has. Thoroughly skilled in his function, nobly valiant in it, and faithful to it—faithful to the death. In rude, modest form, actually a kind of hero, who has perished in serving us !

* The letters from which the foregoing extracts are taken will be found in full in Mr James Grant's "Memoirs of Sir George Sinclair," pp. 423-429.

“Probably his sorrowing family is not left in wealthy circumstances. Most certainly it is pity when a generous emotion, in many men, or in any man, has to die out futile, and leave no *action* behind it. The question, therefore, suggests itself—should not there be a ‘Braidwood Testimonial,’ the proper parties undertaking it, in a modest, serious manner, the public silently testifying (to such extent at least) what worth its emotion has?

“I venture to throw out this hint, and, if it be acted on, will, with great satisfaction, give my mite among other people; but must, for good reasons, say further, that this is all I can do in the matter (of which, indeed, I know nothing but what everybody knows, and a great deal less than every reader of the newspapers knows); and that, in particular, I cannot answer any letters on the subject, should such happen to be sent^{me}. In haste, I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,

“T. CARLYLE.”

In 1862, Charles Boner paid a visit to Carlyle. In his diary is recorded a very interesting account of Carlyle’s conversation, manner, and appearance at this period:—

“*April*, 1862.—Found Carlyle sitting in a dressing-gown and slippers, looking over the proofs of his ‘Frederick the Great.’ Mrs Carlyle sitting on the sofa by the fire. After a while the conversation fell upon Prussia. Carlyle said the Prussians were full of energy and activity. There was energy and perseverance in their character, there was much

resemblance to the English. If they did not do something there was little hope for Germany. Elsewhere in Germany he could see little else than talk and noise, and wretched Radicalism. The king, he thought, was right, if, as he believed, he meant to have no one but himself meddling in the affairs of the army, for that was, and ever had been in Prussia, the reliable, honourable body, which had done every thing for Prussia. If its affairs were to be talked over and speechified about by a parliament, there would soon be an end of this.

“The army would soon be as inefficient as the English was with its Balaclava and its General Bourgoyne. He had seen nothing elsewhere that had impressed him so much as conversation with one or two (not more) Prussian officers had done. From these two he judged all the army. From what he saw in a week or two, while travelling, of the common soldiers, he judged of all the men. He said there was, he believed, no other army like it; neither English, nor French, nor any other. The officers were well educated, and with a high sense of honour; the men filled with a sense of duty. Ours, with our newspaper rant about British pluck, was nothing to it. Our officers knew nothing—absolutely nothing. Some few might, by a common sense view of things, get a sort of routine of their business, but there was, and had been, for the last hundred and fifty years, wretched ignorance and inefficiency. Wellington came at last; he had no genius, but he was one of the not more than two or three men in all Britain who seemed to under-

stand that from certain facts certain circumstances are sure to arise. Therefore, he made himself master of the least trifles, attended to them, and looked for the inevitable results. There was no hurry about him; he went on step by step; he was content to wait. There was veracity in the man, and in all he did. He was thoroughly honest—and it is the want of honesty which is so deplorably felt in the public men of the present day. There was no more veracious man in Britain than he.

“Wellington took the materials given him, Carlyle said, and made the best of them; he knew the officers were ignoramuses, blockheads;—he saw the shortcomings of others, but he said, ‘If I cannot get better materials, I must take them, and make the most of them.’

“Talking of General Bourgoyne (in the American war), he said it was impossible a general in Frederick’s army would have acted so. A Prussian army would have cut its way through the enemy rather than surrender.

“He abused Parliaments, and the talk and rant and speechifying, and the publication of the same in the newspapers; laughing at what the press and the public had said about the soldier’s dress. They abused the stock: Why, a stock was most comfortable; the best neck-covering a soldier could wear. He always wore a stock. He, on his part, did not see why the soldiers were not to wear stocks. He resented indignantly the interference of the press in such matters.

“As he spoke of everything being perfect in

Frederick's army—their marching, their drill, their dress, their arms—I said that, with regard to their dress and system, both had been found troublesome to the soldier, and ridiculously pedantic. He said he never heard that there was any sane man who had yet found fault with the dress of Frederick's troops, or with the drill. In short, he considers any system that differs from Frederick's good for nothing.

“Parliament, the press, the English army, he abused royally, but in language so quaint, so droll, so unlike anything I ever heard before, that once or twice I burst out laughing, though it was evident he saw nothing humorous or out of the way in his expressions. One thing was evident, his detestation of anything approaching dishonesty or inconsistency. Another was his utter appreciation of conscientious work; not work slurred over to serve a purpose irrespective of time.

“He is full of humour, but he does not seem to know it is humour, for he goes on gravely as though the humorous thoughts were merely strict reasoning. F. told me going home that another time he might quite probably take the opposite side, and abuse uncontrolled authority as much as he had done constitutional government. Asked if he had heard —— read. He said, No, he did not care to hear anyone read aloud. He did not like it. He had only heard one person read to please him, that was Mrs Fry, in Newgate. He was a boy then. ‘There were the poor unfortunate outcasts opposite to her, looking and laughing as though they were the

world, and all the rest nothing ; and there she, the wonderful creature, calmly and quietly took out the Bible, and began reading to them the history of Martha, and she read in a way that showed she understood it, had thought it over, and knew perfectly well all about it. She made you understand it all—all the meanings and all the bearings. She had a good voice, but it was not that so much as the earnestness of the creature, and her sincerity. And it had its effect, for the women were quiet and listened. There Mrs Fry stood among them in her Quaker dress, clean and neat, and calm and strong in her own persuasion of the righteousness of the work. And there were some other cleanly dressed creatures about her—Quakers they were too, I believe ; and altogether it was a wonderful sight. I have never seen the like of it. But ——, I don't want to hear him ; I had much rather not. With my own two eyes I can follow the line of a book much faster than he can read, and it is that I want to do to get through a book.'

"Leigh Hunt's reading he liked. He was once obliged to hear him read something (for what he read had not been printed) a play of his, and that too he liked.

"He said that when a young man he had great hopes for German literature, but they had been deceived. All was going, and had gone downwards. There was a sort of Socialism rampant everywhere. All had degenerated into newspapers and parliaments. The aristocratic spirit which showed so prominently in Goethe was no longer to

be found. Spoke of Heine. He thought he discovered in him a stern, grim sort of humour, but still more than he had generally seen in Germans. A Jew, he said, never laughed a hearty out-bursting laugh. I told him Mrs Austin once met Heine at Boulogne when she was a child, and he said, 'Now you can say you have seen Heinrich Heine.' She said, 'Who is Heinrich Heine?' which seemed to amuse him greatly, for he burst into a hearty laugh, showing that, at all events, he was no Jew.

"He should not go to Germany again; as long as he was there he could get nothing fit for a Christian man to eat—no bed big enough to sleep in. The bedsteads were always too short, and like a trough. Once, to his surprise, the mattress was too long for the bed, so he lay all night with it arched like a saddle in the middle. There were no curtains, and in the hotels people stamped overhead, and tramped past his door all night. He had not slept all the seven weeks he was in Germany, and felt the worse for it, he verily believed, up to the present day.

"Talked of soldiers marching. Of course, he asserted that the Prussians marched best of any troops. I told him the Spaniards were good marchers, and spoke of their foot covering. When I told him of the value of good shoes, roomy and strong, and of their being well greased to make the leather supple, he seemed to enter into the matter with zest. He evidently knew the value of a greased shoe. 'Well rubbed in,' he said, 'till

the leather is soft and proof against water. That is the thing.' I said much of the success of an army—more than was generally thought—depended on their foot covering. He said it was very probable.

"Carlyle's long, wild, grey hair hangs over his forehead. His eye is light and lively, his complexion healthy, and his look generally betokens a man who leads a *calm* life, not mixing in the struggle and rush going on around him. His wife told me she took in the *Daily Telegraph* in order to know what was going on in the world. Her husband never reads the papers. He speaks slowly, and as if what he says were well weighed beforehand, as if all had been thoroughly thought over long ago. His way of stating his opinions shows that there is not a shadow of doubt in his mind as to their correctness. He makes you feel, too, he has no thought of changing his views, or of allowing himself to be influenced by aught another may say. His mind is made up once and for ever.

"Nothing here written conveys any idea of his conversation, for the words he used were so strange, and the flow of his conversation so copious, that it is impossible to remember all. This account bears as much resemblance to the reality as a cake of colour does to the painting produced by it." *

In connection with the foregoing, it may be mentioned that the subject of shoes was one frequently discussed by Carlyle. He was wont to descant on the decay of shoe-making, and on the merits of a pair bought many years ago in Dum-

* *Memoirs and Letters of Charles Boner*, vol. ii., pp. 5-12.

fries. As a general rule, he would observe, the foot was the last element that entered into the fantasy of the maker. To a West-end tradesman, who satisfied his fastidious taste in this matter, he addressed the following curious letter:—

“DEAR SIR,—Not for your sake alone, but for that of a Public suffering much in its feet, I am willing to testify that you have rendered me complete and unexpected relief in that particular; and, in short, on trial after trial, that you seem to me to possess, in signal contrast to so very many of your brethren, the actual art of making shoes which are easy to the wearer. My thanks to you are emphatic and sincere.

T. CARLYLE.”

5 CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA,
10th July 1868.

During the contest in America in 1863-4 between the North and the South, Carlyle's sympathies, as was to be expected from his previous utterances, were wholly on the side of the slave-holders. As an indignant American critic has said, all that he could see in a conflict in which there was on both sides more heroism and self-devotion than in any other conflict of arms ever waged upon earth, was simply a bloody fight as to whether servants should be hired for life, or by the month or year. This opinion he embodied in a little squib which he inserted in *Macmillan's Magazine* in 1863:—

ILIAS (AMERICANA) IN NUCE.

“PETER of the North (to Paul of the South).—

Paul, you unaccountable scoundrel, I find you hire your servants for life, not by the month or year, as I do! You are going straight to hell, you ——!

“PAUL.—Good words, Peter. The risk is my own; I am willing to take the risk. Hire your servants by the month or day, and get straight to heaven; leave me to my own method.

“PETER.—No, I won't, I will beat your brains out first. (*And is trying dreadfully ever since, but cannot yet manage it.*)”

Very clever this, doubtless, and also, in the last degree, unjust and onesided. It will gratify most admirers of Carlyle to learn that there is reason to believe that before his death he saw cause to alter his opinion of the great American conflict. Mr Moncure D. Conway, in a lecture delivered at Finsbury on February 6, 1881, said that Mr Carlyle took the wrong side during the great struggle for the abolition of slavery in the United States, not because his sympathies were with the oppressors, but because he was misled as to the facts of the case by the stories told him by slave-owners concerning their patriarchal Arcadias in the South. That this was so, Mr Conway said, was proved by an incident which came within his own knowledge. An American lady, whose noble son had died amid great renown in the northern ranks, sent to Mr Carlyle the memorial volume of the Harvard students who had fallen in the war, containing their letters, their biographies, and an account of their thoughts and deeds during that great struggle for liberty. The old man read that book from first page to

last page, and sometime afterwards, when that American lady came to see him in person, he grasped her hand, and, even with tears, said, "I have been mistaken."

The war between the North and the South was by no means the only subject on which Carlyle differed in opinion from the majority of educated Americans. The name of the great Transatlantic hero, Washington, he could seldom hear pronounced without breaking forth with an explosion of contempt, especially, it is said, if there was an American within hearing.

In 1862 volumes third and fourth of "Frederick" appeared; and in 1865 the labour of fourteen years was at last completed. Many a time before its conclusion did Carlyle wish he had done with it; many a time was he tempted to reproach himself for having ever entered upon such a task at all. "I am still kept overwhelmingly busy here," he writes to Sir George Sinclair in April 1863; "my strength slowly diminishing, my work progressing still more slowly, my heart really almost broken. In some six or eight months—surely not longer than eight—I hope to have at last done; it will be the gladdest day I have seen for ten years back, pretty much the one glad day! I have still half a volume to do; still a furious struggle and *tour de force*, as there have been many, to wind matters up reasonably in half a volume. But this is the *last*, if I can but do it; and if health hold out in any fair measure, I always hope I can." In his Rectorial address, Carlyle told the students of Edinburgh University that he never could manage to write

a book without getting decidedly made ill by it; and it is not difficult to imagine what an excessive mental strain must have been the high imaginative power combined with close attention to details and minutiae which he brought to bear in writing history. Moreover, in the case of "Frederick," his toil was increased by the vastness and intricacy of the subject, and by the difficulty he experienced in forming to himself a true idea of his hero's character. "I never was admitted much to Frederick's confidence," he once said to one of his friends, "and I never cared much about him."

None of Carlyle's works shows greater talents or greater acquirements than "Frederick." It contains several passages where his genius reaches its highest point, and it displays a knowledge of the history and literature of the eighteenth century, probably unequalled, certainly unrivalled by any writer of his time. Yet, as a whole, read consecutively, the work, mainly from the nature of its subject, must be pronounced tedious. Even Carlyle's genius cannot make uniformly interesting to us the tangled maze of the politics of the eighteenth century; and one occasionally gets tired of the endless eccentricities and 'Carlylisms' of the style. It is a book rather to be read in episodes than to be read through. Such descriptions as these of the Tobacco Parliament and of the relations of Frederick and Voltaire none but Carlyle could have written. As regards those admirable pen-and-ink portraits which abound in all Carlyle's writings, "Frederick" occupies a high eminence. What could be better

in a few lines than the following sketch of "Sage Leibnitz, a rather weak, but hugely ingenious old gentleman, with bright eyes and long nose, with vast black peruke and bandy legs." In the selection of choice descriptive personal epithets, Carlyle was unequalled. His namesake, Dr Carlyle of Inveresk, he once described as "a pot-walloping Sadducee"—than which it would be difficult to imagine a mere vivid delineation in the same space, or a more correct one, judging from Carlyle's point of view.

LORD RECTOR.

CHAPTER VIII.

LORD RECTOR.

NOT long after the completion of "Frederick," Carlyle, on November 11, 1865, was appointed Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh. He was elected by a majority of 657 to 310 over "him they call Dizzy," who stood as his opponent. Twice before he had declined similar honours, once from Aberdeen, and once from Glasgow, but his heart in his old age warmed towards his *Alma Mater*, and he accepted the proffered tribute of respect, and announced his intention of delivering the Rectorial address in the following spring.

Many can still recollect the thrill of excitement which went through the land, when, on the 2d of April 1866, the address was delivered in the Music Hall of the Northern Capital. Men from all parts of the country had flocked to hear it, some coming from London for that special purpose, and departing as soon as the ceremony was over. The hall, capable of containing over eighteen hundred persons, was densely packed, but it contained only a small portion of those who had made application for the much-coveted tickets of admission. The University authorities for some time had been

besieged by applications, in number altogether unprecedented, and they had no small difficulty in settling various conflicting claims. At length it was arranged that the students who elected Mr Carlyle should receive tickets, if they applied within the specified time, and that the members of the University Council should obtain the residue according to priority of application. Ladies tickets to the number of one hundred and fifty were issued, each Professor obtaining four, and the remainder being placed at the disposal of Sir David Brewster, the Principal.

No sooner had Carlyle entered the building than he was immediately greeted by tremendous cheers. "Every eye," writes a witness of the scene, "was fixed on the Rector. To all appearance, as he sat, time and labour had dealt kindly with him. His face had not yet lost the country bronze which he brought up with him from Dumfriesshire as a student fifty-six years ago. His long residence in London had not touched his Annandale look, nor had it—as we soon learned—touched his Annandale accent. His countenance was striking, homely, truthful, sincere—the countenance of a man on whom 'the burden of the unintelligible world' had weighed more heavily than on most. His hair was yet almost dark; his moustache and short beard were iron grey. His eyes were wide, melancholy, sorrowful; and seemed as if they had been at times a-weary of the sun. Altogether in his aspect there was something aboriginal, as of a piece of unhewn granite, which had never been polished to any

approved pattern, whose natural and original vitality had never been tampered with." Around him on the platform were seated a brilliant assemblage, the Principal and Professors of the University and many other men of note, including his brother, John Aitken Carlyle.

The proceedings began by the degree of LL.D. being conferred on Mr Erskine of Linlathen—Carlyle's host for the time being—on Professors Huxley, Tyndall, and Ramsay, and on Dr Rae, the arctic explorer. Carlyle himself had been offered the degree of LL.D., but had laughed it off, saying that he had a brother a Dr Carlyle, and that if two Dr Carlyles should appear in Paradise mistakes might arise. The degrees having been bestowed, Principal Brewster announced that the Lord Rector would now deliver his address. Having divested himself of his robe of office, in slow, measured tones Carlyle began to speak. He had no manuscript with him; he had, he said, when he attempted to write, found he was not accustomed to write speeches; and that he did not get on very well. "So," he continued, "I flung that away, and resolved to trust to the inspiration of the moment—just to what came uppermost." In the address there was nothing very new to diligent readers of his works; as he had advised a wider circle all his life, so now he advised the students of Edinburgh to work diligently, to shun foolish talk, to reverence worth; to be veracious, honourable, and high-minded. But the advice in this case was conveyed, not, as often before, in a terrible jeremiad full of

scorn and wrath and bitterness, but in a gentle, loving tone. The old scenes which came back to his memory as he recalled his youthful studies in Edinburgh, and thought perchance of the time when Sir David Brewster, now Principal of the University, had inserted his earliest writings in the "Edinburgh Encyclopædia," called forth all the latent tenderness of his nature, and made his last appearance as a public speaker an episode in his life on which all to whom his memory is dear love to dwell. The address, which occupied an hour and a half in delivery, was heard only by those near the platform, as his voice was too weak to fill the large hall. In its printed form, however, it has probably, in its various editions, been read as extensively as any of Carlyle's works, and never, we are safe to say, without admiration. Its calm, beautiful wisdom forms a refreshing contrast to the solemn platitudes and rhetorical extravagancies which form the staple of too many rectorial addresses.

When the proceedings were over, Carlyle proposed to walk to the place where he was staying, but the crowd pressed so thickly around him that he was glad to take refuge in a carriage. "That evening," writes one who knew him, "he sat with a friend far into the night, telling the story of the old and weary days when he wandered, with Gloom and Doubt for his companions, along the streets which had that day been thronged with crowds eager to do him honour. There was on his face a luminous, happy expression, as of one who for the

first time saw his thorny path leading to a region of flowers. At every moment he recurred to some memory associated with his wife, to her sustaining cheerfulness through years of loneliness and poverty, and with an almost quivering voice he imagined the wonder she must feel at the homage that had surprised them in their old age." Little did he think, as he thus talked, how soon she was to be taken from him. In the hour of his greatest triumph, his greatest calamity came upon him. On Saturday, April 21st, while he was still in Scotland, his wife met with her death under very singular circumstances. She was driving in Hyde Park, when she saw her favourite dog suddenly in danger of being run over. She motioned to the coachman to stop, and took the dog into the carriage, but the shock had been so severe that she died before reaching home. Her health had for some months been feeble, but not to such a degree as to cause serious apprehension.

On receipt of the sad intelligence Carlyle hastened back to London. On the following Wednesday her remains were conveyed from London to Haddington. Mr Carlyle was accompanied by his brother, Dr Carlyle, John Forster, and the Hon. Mr Twisleton. She was buried in the old Cathedral of Haddington, where her father had been laid in 1819. For her tombstone Carlyle wrote the following inscription:—

"HERE LIKEWISE NOW RESTS JANE WELSH CARLYLE,
SPOUSE OF THOMAS CARLYLE, CHELSEA, LONDON. SHE
WAS BORN AT HADDINGTON, 14TH JULY 1801, ONLY CHILD

OF THE ABOVE JOHN WELSH AND OF GRACE WELSH, CAPLEGELL, DUMFRIESSHIRE, HIS WIFE. IN HER BRIGHT EXISTENCE SHE HAD MORE SORROWS THAN ARE COMMON, BUT ALSO A SOFT INVINCIBILITY, A CAPACITY OF DISCERNMENT, AND A NOBLE LOYALTY OF HEART WHICH ARE RARE. FOR 40 YEARS SHE WAS THE TRUE AND LOVING HELPMATE OF HER HUSBAND, AND BY ACT AND WORD UNWEARIEDLY FORWARDED HIM AS NONE ELSE COULD IN ALL OF WORTHY THAT HE DID OR ATTEMPTED. SHE DIED AT LONDON, 21ST APRIL 1866, SUDDENLY SNATCHED FROM HIM, AND THE LIGHT OF HIS LIFE AS IF GONE OUT."

For a time Carlyle's grief was terrible; and he never altogether recovered from the shock. Many of his letters to his friends show how deep and abiding was his sorrow. There seemed to him to be little left in the world worth living for. "A most sorry dog kennel," he said, "it oftenest all seems to me, and wise words, if one even had them, to be only thrown away upon it. *Basta, basta*, I for the most part can say of it, and look with longings towards the still country where, at last, we and our beloved ones shall be together again." To his friend Mr Erskine of Linlathen, then mourning for the death of his sister, he wrote—"Alas! what can writing do in such a case. The irrevocable stroke has fallen; the sore heart has to carry on its own unfathomable dialogue with the Eternities and their gloomy fact, all speech on it, from the friendliest sympathies, is apt to be vain or worse. Under your quiet words, in that little note, there is legible to me a depth of violent grief and bereavement which seems to enjoin silence rather. We knew the beau-

tiful soul that has departed, the love that had united you and her from the beginning of existence, and how desolate and sad the scene now is for him who is left solitary. Ah, me! ah, me! Yesterday gone a twelvemonth (31st March 1866, *Saturday* by the day of the week) was the day I arrived at your door in Edinburgh, and was met by that friendliest of hostesses and you; three days before, I had left at the door of this room one dearer and kinder than all the earth to me, whom I was not to behold again. What a change for you since then! what a change for me! Change after change, following upon both of us—upon you especially. It is the saddest feature of old age, that the old man has to see himself daily growing more lonely; reduced to commune with the inarticulate Eternities, and the Loved Ones now irresponsive who have preceded him thither. Well, well; there is a blessedness in this too, if we take it well. There is a grandeur in it, if also an extent of sombre sadness which is new to one; nor is hope quite wanting, nor the clear conviction that those whom *we* would most screen from sore pain and misery are now safe and at rest. It lifts one to real kingship withal, real for the first time in this scene of things. Courage, my friend; let us endure patiently and act piously to the end."

Mrs Carlyle was a woman well worthy of her husband's love. Dickens, writing to John Forster, says, "Her sudden death was a terrible shock to me, and poor Carlyle has been in my mind ever since. How often have I thought of the unfinished

novel : no one now to finish it! None of the writing women come near her." "No one could doubt this who had come within the fascinating influence of that sweet and noble nature," adds Mr Forster. "With the highest gifts of intellect, and the charm of a most varied knowledge of men and things, there was something beyond. No one who knew Mrs Carlyle could replace her loss when she passed away." "She was able to live," said Charlotte Cushman, "in the full light of Carlyle's genius and celebrity without being overpowered by it ; she was in her own way as great as he, and yet lived only to minister to him. Clever, witty, calm, cool, unsmiling, unsparing, a *raconteur* unparalleled, a manner *un-imitable*, and behaviour scrupulous, and a power invincible—a combination rare and strange exists in that plain, keen, unattractive, yet unescapable woman." One or two anecdotes on record concerning her give some insight into her character. One day the Countess of Jersey let Mrs Carlyle know that she was coming to take afternoon tea with her. All the morning Mrs Carlyle was busy with her photograph album, arranging and rearranging the pictures. Among these was the likeness of her milliner, a decent Scotchwoman. This she placed so that it formed a companion-picture to that of the Duchess of Sutherland. Lady Jersey arrived, and the album was duly inspected. On turning up the page bearing the companion portraits, the Countess remarked that the face of the lady beside the Duchess was strange to her. "Oh, that," said Mrs Carlyle, "that's the photograph of

a remarkably nice woman whom you would like to know." "Who is she?" "My dressmaker." "Oh, Mrs Carlyle," exclaimed the horrified peeress, "what would the duchess think of that?" "Why, what should she think of it," was the cool rejoinder, "aren't they both women?" When her great husband was in his "tantrums," it is said no one could manage him but his wife. He could scarcely ever get his coffee hot enough. One morning he was in an unusually disagreeable humour, and ordered the coffee to be taken away as too cold. A fresh supply was brought, this time almost boiling: this too he ordered off. "My dear," mildly observed Mrs Carlyle, "what would you think of holding a red-hot cinder in your mouth, and drinking your coffee through that?" The Seer collapsed, and "sipped his coffee like a lamb."

A few months after his wife's death, Carlyle appeared before the public as the warm defender of Governor Eyre, whom he, as well as Kingsley, Tennyson, and Ruskin, considered a most unjustly abused public servant. He acted as Vice-President of the Defence Fund. His views on the subject are embodied in the following letter to Mr Hamilton Hume, the Honorary Secretary of the Fund. It is dated "Ripple Court, Dover, August 23, 1866":—

"SIR,—The clamour raised against Governor Eyre appears to me disgraceful to the good sense of England; and if it rested on any depth of conviction, and were not rather (as I always flatter

myself it is) a thing of rumour and hearsay, of repetition and reverberation, mostly from the teeth outward, I should consider it of evil omen to the country and to its highest interests in these times. For my own share, all the light that has yet reached me on Mr Eyre and his history in the world, goes steadily to establish the conclusion that he is a just, humane, and valiant man, faithful to his trusts everywhere, and with no ordinary faculty of executing them ; that his late services in Jamaica were of great, perhaps of incalculable value, as certainly they were of perilous and appalling difficulty—something like the case of ‘ fire ’ suddenly reported ‘ in the ship’s powder room,’ in mid-ocean, where the moments mean the ages, and life and death hang on your use or misuse of the moments ; and, in short, that penalty and clamour are not the thing this Governor merits from any of us, but honour, and thanks, and wise imitation (I will farther say), should similar emergencies arise, on the great scale or on the small, in whatever we are governing !

“ The English nation never loved anarchy, nor was wont to spend its sympathy on miserable, mad seditions, especially of this inhuman and half-brutish type ; but always loved order, and the prompt suppression of seditions, and reserved its tears for something worthier than promoters of such delirious and fatal enterprises, who had got their wages for their sad industry. Has the English nation changed, then, altogether ? I flatter myself it is not, not yet quite ; but only that certain loose, super-

ficial portions of it have become a great deal louder, and not any wiser than they formerly used to be.

“At anyrate, though much averse at anytime, and at this time in particular, to figure on committees, or run into public noises without call, I do at once, and feel that as a British citizen I should, and must, make you welcome to my name for your committee, and to whatever good it can do you. With the hope only that many other British men, of far more significance in such a matter, will at once or gradually do the like ; and that, in fine, by wise effort and persistence, a blind and disgraceful act of public injustice may be prevented ; and an egregious folly as well—not to say, for none can say or compute, what a vital detriment through the British Empire, in such an example set to all the colonies and governors the British Empire has.

“Farther service, I fear, I am not in a state to promise, but the whole weight of my conviction and good wishes is for you ; and if other service possible to me do present itself, I shall not want for willingness in case of need. Inclosed is my mite of contribution to your fund. I have the honour to be, yours truly, T. CARLYLE.”

In 1868, Carlyle was asked to give a valedictory address before the expiration of his period of office as Rector. He declined in a letter which will be found in the last volume of his *Essays*, saying that for him, in present circumstances, a valedictory speech was a thing not to be thought of.

We may suitably conclude this chapter by the insertion of two letters of Carlyle's which have reference to University matters. The following was addressed to Dr Hutchison Stirling, then a candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University. It is dated "Chelsea, 16th June 1868":—

"DEAR STIRLING,—You well know how reluctant I have been to interfere at all in the election now close on us, and that in stating, as bound, what my own clear knowledge of your qualities was, I have held strictly by that, and abstained from more. But the news I now have from Edinburgh is of such a complexion, so dubious and so surprising to me; and I now find I shall privately have so much regret in a certain event—which seems to be reckoned possible, and to depend on one gentleman of the seven—that, to secure my own conscience in the matter, a few plainer words seem needful. To whatever I have said of you already, therefore, I now volunteer to add, that I think you not only the one man in Britain capable of bringing Metaphysical Philosophy, in the ultimate, German or European, and highest actual form of it, distinctly home to the understanding of British men who wish to understand it, but that I notice in you farther, on the moral side, a sound strength of intellectual discernment, a noble valour and reverence of mind, which seems to me to mark you out as the man capable of doing us the highest service in ethical science too: that of restoring,

or decisively beginning to restore, the doctrine of morals to what I must ever reckon the one true and everlasting basis (namely, the divine or supra-sensual one), and thus of victoriously reconciling or rendering identical the latest dictates of modern science with the earliest dawnings of wisdom among the race of men.

“ This is truly my opinion, and how important to me, not for the sake of Edinburgh University alone, but of the whole world for ages to come, I need not say to you ! I have not the honour of any personal acquaintance with Mr Adam Black, late member for Edinburgh, but for fifty years back have known him, in the distance, and by current and credible report, as a man of solid sense, independence, probity, and public spirit ; and if, in your better knowledge of the circumstances, you judge it suitable to read this note to him—to him, or indeed to any other person—you are perfectly at liberty to do so. Yours sincerely always.

T. CARLYLE.”

The following interesting letter was sent by Carlyle to a medical student who had been a prominent supporter of his candidature for the Lord Rectorship, in reply to a request for his opinion on “ the woman question ” in general, and especially in regard to the entrance of women into the medical profession :—

“ 5 *Cheyne Row, Chelsea, 9th Feb. 1871.*

“ DEAR SIR,—It is with reluctance that I write anything to you on this subject of female emanci-

pation, which is now rising to such a height, and I do it only on the strict condition that whatever I say shall be private, and nothing of it gets into the newspapers. The truth is, the topic for five-and-twenty years past, especially for the last three or four, has been a mere sorrow to me, one of the most afflicting proofs of the miserable anarchy that prevails in human society; and I have avoided thinking of it except when fairly compelled. What little has become clear to me on it I shall now endeavour to tell you. In the first place then, I have never doubted that the true and noble function of a woman in this world was, is, and for ever will be, that of being a wife and helpmate to a worthy man, and discharging well the duties that devolve on her in consequence, as mother of children and mistress of the household — duties high, noble, silently important as any that can fall to a human creature — duties which, if well discharged, constitute woman, in a soft, beautiful, and almost sacred way, the queen of the world, and which by her natural faculties, graces, strengths and weaknesses, are every way indicated as specially hers. The true destiny of a woman, therefore, is to wed a man she can love and esteem, and to lead noiselessly, under his protection, with all the wisdom, grace, and heroism that is in her, the life presented in consequence. It seems furthermore indubitable that if a woman miss this destiny, or have renounced it, she has every right before God and man to take up whatever honest employment she can find open to her in the world. Probably there are several or

many employments, now exclusively in the hands of men, for which women might be more or less fit—printing, tailoring, weaving, clerking, &c. That medicine is intrinsically not unfit for them is proved from the fact that in much more sound and earnest ages than ours, before the medical profession rose into being, they were virtually the physicians and surgeons, as well as sick-nurses, all that the world had. Their form of intellect, their sympathy, their wonderful acuteness of observation, &c., seem to indicate in them peculiar qualities for dealing with disease, and evidently in certain departments (that of female disease) they have quite peculiar opportunities of being useful. My answer to your question may be that two things are not doubtful to me in the matter :—

“ 1. That women—any woman who deliberately so determines—have a right to study medicine, and that it might be profitable and serviceable to have facilities, or at least possibilities, offered them for so doing.

But (2). That, for obvious reasons, female students of medicine ought to have, if possible, female teachers, or else an extremely select kind of men ; and in particular, that to have young women present among young men in anatomical classes, clinical lectures, or generally studying medicine in concert, is an incongruity of the first magnitude, and shocking to think of to every pure and modest mind. That is all I have to say, and I send it to you under the conditions above mentioned, as a friend for the use of friends. Yours sincerely. T. CARLYLE.”

CLOSING YEARS.

CHAPTER IX.

CLOSING YEARS.

THE calm evening of his now solitary life was passed by Carlyle in the old house at Chelsea, where his comforts were assiduously attended to by his niece, now Mrs Alexander Carlyle, and where a choice circle of friends loved to gather round the venerable philosopher and listen to his wonderful talk. "It was generally," writes one who enjoyed his friendship, "in the evening that Mr Carlyle was surrounded by his friends. Tea was the usual preliminary, and after it the philosopher—especially in late years—was accustomed to take his seat, half reclining, on the floor, so that the bowl of his clay pipe might reach the neighbourhood of the fire-place, and its fumes go up the chimney. There he would pour out his wonderful talk, which seemed to be of immeasurable range and richness. It mattered little what subject was suggested. The Russian, the Italian, the Frenchman or American who happened to be his guest, was sure to find that here was one who could give them details about the history and literature of their several countries which they had never heard before. The present writer has known him to talk about birds until one would

have said he must have passed his life in the study of ornithology, until the next time he heard him discoursing about tea or coffee, or words or myths—almost anything—when he would become aware that he was in the presence of one who had explored nearly every part of the world he lived in to the farthest point. Not less impressive than the matter was the manner of his wonderful talk. Sometimes his face would flame with the wrath or earnestness which his subject kindled, and his listeners shrank as before a gathering storm; but it might be that some droll aspect of the case would catch his eye, and the storm would burst in thunderous but not unmusical laughter; or, still oftener, some delicate or tender association would surprise his stormy path, and in a moment his voice would sink to the sweetness of a lute. The tobacco-pipe always seemed to be a sign of the inward workings of the sublime talker; it would send out thick clouds or quiet blue curls, as its master's story or argument grew vehement or gentle; but it was sure to get out at nearly every punctuation of his long sentences, and to have to be relighted many times in course of the evening. Sometimes in the summer twilight he would sit with a fellow-smoker in his garden, and it might be on such occasions there would be long meditative pauses—half hours or more of absolute silence—for whenever Mr Carlyle sat under the open sky his mind inclined to silence." * In his demeanour, whether as host or

* *Daily News*, Feb. 7th, 1881.

guest, he was courtesy itself, and showed the greatest consideration for the feelings of others.

The Reform Bill of 1867 elicited from Carlyle what may be described as a "Latest Day Pamphlet"* under the significant title of "Shooting Niagara: and After?" By the Bill, in his opinion, England was pushed into the rapids from which there was no way of escape backward, and the kingdom now could not but shoot the cataract into the vortex of democracy. "Meanwhile," he says, "the *good* that lies in this delirious 'New Reform Measure,'—as there lies something of good in almost everything—is perhaps not inconsiderable. It accelerates notably what I have long looked upon as inevitable;—pushes us at once into the Niagara rapids: irresistibly propelled, with ever-increasing velocity, we shall now arrive; who knows how *soon*. For a generation past, it has been growing daily more and more evident that there was only this issue; but now the issue itself has become imminent, the distance of it to be guessed by years." He then proceeds to speculate upon what may be looked for in the coming era, and "as it is not always the part of wise men and good citizens to sit silent," he makes several suggestions, some of them by no means destitute of practical value. Most people, of whatever shade of political opinion, will agree that there is much sound sense in "Shooting Niagara: and After?" and probably there is no man living who would be willing to endorse all its statements.

* Originally published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, August 1867.

To an American writer who sent him a copy of a work of his, Carlyle, in January 1869, addressed the following letter which contains his opinion on a subject which then excited and even now excites no little attention in fashionable society :—

“DEAR SIR,—At last I received your pamphlet, [‘The Temple of Isis,’ by William Denovan] and have read it with what attention and appreciation I could bestow.

“Considerable faculties of mind are manifested in it; powers of intellect, of imagination; a serious earnest character; here and there a tone of sombre eloquence and vestiges of real literary skill.

“But my constant regret was, and is, to see such powers operating in a field palpably *chaotic*, and lying beyond the limits of man’s intelligence! These are not thoughts which you give, they are huge gaunt vacant dreams, for ever incapable, *by nature*, of being either affirmed or denied.

“My clear advice, therefore, would be: Give up all that, refuse to employ your intellect on things where no intellect *can* avail; to sow good seed on realms of mere cloud and shadow! The highest intellect which issues in no *certainty* has completely *failed*. The world of practice and fact is the true arena for *its* inhabitants; wide enough for any or for all intellects of men; and never lay more encumbered with sordid darkness and pernicious delusions than now.

“Real intellect might write with advantage on such things; better still perhaps, it might remain

silent, and lend its whole force in illuminating one's own poor path in such a wilderness; in more and more clearly ascertaining, for at least one earnest man, *What* to do, and *How* to do it!

"Probably you will not adopt this advice, almost certainly not at once; nor shall that disaffect me at all. Your tract I found throughout to be rather pleasant reading, and to have a certain interest; nothing in it, except one small section treating of a thing I never mention unless when compelled—the thing which calls itself 'Spiritualism' (which might more fitly be called '*Ultra-BRUTALISM*,' and '*LITURGY of Dead-Sea APES*'), was disagreeable to me.—Yours with many good wishes.

T. CARLYLE."

In 1869 Carlyle sent to the newspapers a letter on his favourite subject of "Emigration." This was followed in 1870 by an important letter in the *Times* on "The Latter Stage of the French-German War," quoting history to show that the French defeat had been well deserved. He had no sympathy whatever with the cheap pity and newspaper affliction over fallen and afflicted France; and heartily rejoiced that Germany had got her own again. "That noble, patient, deep, pious, and solid Germany should be at length welded into a Nation, and become Queen of the Continent, instead of vapouring, vain-glorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless, and over-sensitive France, seems to me the hopefullest public fact that has occurred in my time." In 1873 Carlyle received a gratifying

token of how much his labours in German history and literature had been appreciated by the Germans themselves, by being, on the death of Manzoni, presented with the Prussian *Ordre pour le Mérite*—an honour given by the Knights of the Order and confirmed by the Sovereign, and limited to thirty German and thirty foreign knights.

From the time when he first fixed his residence in London, Carlyle was in the habit of paying an annual visit to Scotland, generally to his native Dumfriesshire, where he usually resided with his brother-in-law, Mr Aitken. He also sometimes resided with Provost Swan of Kirkcaldy, a former pupil of his, for whom he entertained great esteem and affection. Once during a visit to Provost Swan's in 1874, he was asked whether he objected to stay to prayers. He said, "No," and took up a Bible and began to read aloud the book of Job till he came to the passage in the third chapter, "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest," when he stopped, saying, "Ah, I had forgotten that."*

In 1875 Carlyle was offered by Mr Disraeli, then Prime Minister, the Grand Cross of the Bath, but he did not see fit to accept the proffered honour. A more gratifying proof of respect awaited him in the same year. On Saturday, the 4th December 1875, his eightieth birth-day, a number of his admirers united in an address to him as follows:—

* This, we believe, is the correct version of the story told in the *Athenæum*, Feb. 12, 1881, p. 233.

“TO THOMAS CARLYLE.

December 4, 1875.

“SIR,—We beg leave, on this interesting and memorable anniversary, to tender you the expression of our most respectful good wishes.

“Not a few of the voices which would have been dearest to you to hear to-day are silent in death. There may, perhaps, be some compensation in the assurance of the reverent sympathy and affectionate gratitude of many thousands of living men and women throughout the British Islands and elsewhere, who have derived delight and inspiration from the noble series of your writings, and who have noted also how powerfully the world has been influenced by your great personal example. A whole generation has elapsed since you described to us the hero as a Man of Letters. We congratulate you and ourselves on the spacious fulness of years which has enabled you to sustain this rare dignity among mankind in all its possible splendour and completeness. It is a matter for general rejoicing that a teacher whose genius and achievements have lent radiance to his time, still dwells among us; and our hope is that you may yet long continue in fair health, to feel how much you are loved and honoured, and to rest in the retrospect of a brave and illustrious life.

“We request you to do us the honour to accept the accompanying copy of a medal designed by Mr J. E. Boehm, which has been struck in commemoration of the day.”

The address, which is said to have been written by Professor Masson of Edinburgh, was signed by many of the most illustrious of Carlyle's contemporaries, including Tennyson, Browning, George Eliot, Lewes, Bain, Max Muller, Darwin, Morley, Huxley, Tyndall, John Forster, J. R. Green, Blackie, Caird, Frederic Harrison, Hooker, Lecky, Lubbock, Seeley, Sidgwick, Fitzjames and Leslie Stephen, Anthony Trollope, Dean Stanley, Principal Tulloch, &c., &c. The medal bears on one of its faces a medallion of Carlyle, and on the other the words—"In commemoration—December 4, 1875." Silver and bronze copies were struck for subscribers, with a few for presentation to public institutions. The copy presented to Carlyle was in gold.

Carlyle's last contributions to literature were published anonymously in 1875 in *Fraser's Magazine*. They comprise a series of sketches of "The Early Kings of Norway," and a pleasant essay on "Portraits of John Knox." The "Early Kings" is said to have been written long before its publication. Its style is marked in the highest degree by "Carlylisms;" and those competent to judge pronounce it written with insufficient knowledge of the subject. Nevertheless, it displays Carlyle's peculiar power of making the history of the past stand out clearly and vividly. The essay on the "Portraits of Knox" provoked a good deal of adverse artistic opinion; and we believe antiquaries in general do not coincide with Carlyle's view as to the true portrait of Knox.

During the remaining years of his life, Carlyle

busied himself in the writing of sketches of Edward Irving, of James Carlyle, of his wife, &c. The following paper, which appeared in *The World*, Nov. 22, 1876, gives a graphic picture of him and his surroundings in his old age:—

“Seated in his ample arm-chair, Thomas Carlyle—the historian, biographer, essayist, and thinker, who has written his name deeper in the literature of his country than any man now living—presents a remarkable instance of the gradual development, not only of style, but of character, not only of literary work, but of personal appearance. When we compare the grey-headed rugged featured man, swathed in ample dressing-gown of grey duffel, with the sketches of him taken in his youth, we note the work of time and thought upon the human organism. In the sketches by Lawrence and others, he appears as a young Scotchman, and nothing more; but in the face of to-day every line speaks of the strong worker eager for truth, be it sunk in ever so deep a well, impatient of incompetence, scornful of conventionality, cleaving his way through the lies and blunders of ages, till he succeeds in letting fresh air and genuine sunlight into the tangled maze that men call history. In the soft Doric tones—Ionic would be an apter comparison—of his native Dumfriesshire, he discourses in a fashion peculiar to himself on a variety of subjects, and invests all with interest. It is difficult to imagine the question on which his utterances could be ‘dry.’ Enormous and omnivorous reading has stored a powerful memory with a mass of facts wonderfully

arranged in the pigeon-holes of his brain, and ready at any moment to be focussed on the subject in hand. But it is not mere learning which lends his conversation its special charm, but rather his faculty of illustration, sometimes poetical, sometimes homely, but always striking. It must not be imagined that he degenerates into monologue, for perhaps no really admirable talker has less of the button-holder in his composition. He gives his views fully, amply enriching his talk with anecdote and example, but ever keeping the real core of the subject well in view. As he talks on, in even deliberate tone, the listener finds his mind carried away for a while into queer nooks and crannies, to be presently brought back to the straight path by a keen and pertinent expression of opinion—not undecided or wavering this, but sharp, strong, and sudden as a stroke from the hammer of Thor. The effect of Mr Carlyle's 'talk' may be compared to that produced by a walk in one of those quaint medieval cities through which a broad modern thoroughfare has recently been cut. Turning aside from the straight path towards the railway station, the wanderer meanders among narrow streets and quaint gables, pauses at the foot of ancient towers, plumps upon a massive gateway revealing the traces of Roman occupation, notes the strange images that monkish masons delighted in, and the weathercock shot through and through by a skilful marksman, till all at once he emerges from an alley into a blaze of light, and finds that he has reached his destination after all. It is this element of surprise that distinguishes Mr Carlyle's 'talk' from that of

all other men. It is impossible to predict what opinion he will pronounce, and equally vain to imagine the grounds on which it will be based. All this flow of argument and illustration proceeds from natural temperament. None of the aids to conversation supposed to have been indulged in by the gossips of the 'Noctes Ambrosianæ' finds a place in Mr Carlyle's dietary. He is naturally abstemious, eating but two sparing meals daily, and drinking never more than a couple of glasses of wine. His sole relaxation, amusement, or dissipation is tobacco, and tobacco in its simplest form. Neither sleek cigar nor dainty cigarette has charms for the philosopher of Chelsea. He smokes a pipe—not of meerschaum or of *bruyere* (*Anglice* 'brier'),—but of earth, the churchwarden or yard of clay, the lineal descendant of the pipes dug up by the dozen on the site of Don Saltero's coffee-house, hard by in Cheyne Walk. A genuine Puritan pipe—the place of the short-cut beloved by Roundheads being supplied by York River. In the bright summertide, when the old-fashioned garden is neat and trim, it is Mr Carlyle's humour to sit under an awning in the sweet morning air, and discuss many pipes of his favourite weed. It is, however, abundantly clear that he does not require tobacco to stimulate his conversation; for when in the vein he will, when taking one of his long walks, supply his companion with abundant food for memory and reflection. There is a sort of rumour—of the value of rumours generally—that Mr Carlyle is apt to be curt in his address. This is not only untrue but the very reverse of the truth. He is certainly averse to

the intrusion of utter strangers, and on one occasion vouchsafed an odd but well-merited reply to a man who walked up to him and asked 'if he might look at him.' The philosopher merely said, 'Look on, man; it will do me no harm and you no good;' and walked quietly on. The most curious part of this *recontre* is, that the person whose silly request was so gently rebuked, walked away delighted, saying that the remark was so 'like Carlyle,' so thoroughly 'characteristic.' Now it was something less than characteristic; for Mr Carlyle when approached like any other gentleman through the medium of an introduction, is courtesy itself, and quite ready, if in fair health, to let his visitor enjoy a sample of his picturesque talk. Not very long ago he invited one of our most successful novelists to call upon him, and edified that gentleman with much brilliant discourse on men and things—all and every, save only the subject which naturally lay nearest the young author's heart—his own works. At last the long-expected remark came: 'You know Scotland well,' quoth the sage, 'and I have read your books with great pleasure. They are amusing — yes, amusing. You are just amusing. But when are you going to do something; to write a real book, eh, man?'

"A few years ago Mr Carlyle not only smoked, but worked in his garden; and retired within doors to a little room at the top of the house. He now occupies the drawing-room of the house in Cheyne Row — a bright, cheerful apartment, furnished, among other things, with a flat writing-table, a reading-easel, a wooden paper-knife marked 'Men-

tone,' and a bowie knife of tremendous proportions. The walls are adorned with paintings and engravings of members of the Carlylese Olympus. Occupying one side of the room is a huge picture by Pesne—the 'Little Drummer'—Frederick and his sister, the Margravine of Bayreuth, as children, marching gaily along, the boy playing vigorously on a drum. From a spot on the right of the door smiles the before-mentioned Wilhelmina, very coquetishly, with her hood drawn down in killing-fashion over one of her great bright eyes. Beneath the *séduisante marquise* hangs the plain face of Cromwell, one of the many examples of the 'Hero as King' in Cheyne Row. Hard by are some choice engravings by Albert Durer and his school, notably the 'Melancholia,' and further on is *le roi* Voltaire crowned in the Theatre Français; Frederick in a cocked hat, looking across the room with no friendly gaze. Next hang two copies of Cranach's picture in the Wartburg—the father and mother of the 'Hero as Priest'—and the rare engraving of Feythorne's Cromwell. The dining-room is also filled with pictures and engravings, portraits of Jean Paul, of Hume, of Martin Luther, and Goethe. The latter bears the autograph signature of the great German beneath the lines:—

'Liegt dir Gestern klar und offen
Wirkst du Heute kraftig frey
Kannst auch auf ein Morgen hoffen
Das nicht minder glücklich sey.'

'Weimar, 7th November 1825.'

It was presented to Mr Carlyle on the completion of his masterly translation of Wilhelm Meister.

There is also a curious engraving of that ancient hussar Ziethen, 'Sitzend von seinen König,' who is holding the old warrior down in his seat. On the mantelpiece stands an example of the famous Worcester jug, dedicated to the great Frederick, and painted in 'transfer' over the glaze. This jug is curious as a piece of historic pottery, but its value has been greatly increased since the publication of the 'History of Friedrich II., called Frederick the Great.' Scattered here and there are portraits of Mr Carlyle himself—the head by Samuel Lawrence, the pen and ink drawing by Maclise, the admirable bust by Woolner — and a terra-cotta miniature of the magnificent statue by Boehm, exhibited at the Royal Academy. Just inside the door is a screen covered with valuable engravings, arranged with a keen sense of the fun to be caused by incongruous juxta-position. A melancholy interest attaches to this monument of patience, taste, and humour. It was made by Mrs Carlyle. It will be recollected that this amiable and gifted lady died a few years ago, after being terribly frightened by her pet dog leaping out of her carriage in Hyde Park. The animal escaped safe and sound from the crowd of vehicles, but his mistress survived the shock but a very few hours.

"As the morning mists clear from the Thames, various figures may be seen strolling about with that peculiar air which indicates expectation in its possessor. The pilgrim is sometimes a broad-shouldered Scot, sometimes a little townsman from the Midlands, now and then an obvious artizan, long-limbed, and bowler-hatted. They can

all read, these lingerers by the Thames. They diligently peruse the morning papers, and now and then cast an eager look towards the end of Cheyne Row, for they have come many a weary mile to look upon their hero, who has taught them, in round terms too, to appreciate their betters. At last emerges a tall, slightly-bowed figure, surmounted by a wide-awake of ample brim; and as Thomas Carlyle takes his early morning stroll, they gaze, neither curiously nor impertinently, but reverently. Unheeding he passes on, as one whose spirit is not stirred by public observation. This before-breakfast promenade is part of a regular programme through which the inventor of the clothes philosophy works daily. Breakfast over, work commences; and here be it observed that Mr Carlyle does not qualify reading and study as work, reserving the latter term for regular production. In this he differs widely from the great army of literary nihilists—the men of letters who pass their days in the reading-room of the British Museum, and take their full value out of the London Library, but never produce anything. His hours of work are short—from half-past ten or eleven till two, the rest of the afternoon being devoted to exercise, either in the form of a long walk with an old friend or congenial companion, or of a jaunt up to town in a Chelsea omnibus. The last named dissipation is a great favourite with Mr Carlyle. He believes that the shaking, from which the effeminate hansom is comparatively free, but which may be thoroughly enjoyed in an omnibus, is a peculiarly wholesome species of exercise. Till within a few years he rode and drove a great

deal. Making a rapid calculation one day, he said that during the time he was engaged in the production of *Friedrich II.* he rode twice round the world. On alighting from the omnibus he will stroll in any direction, not bent entirely on exercise, but observing keenly the human comedy visible on a London afternoon. His tastes would not occur to one who met him for the first time during his afternoon stroll as being of a literary complexion. He is no loiterer at book-stalls, or grubber among curiosities. The first time we saw him out of doors he was gazing intently at the bonnets in a shop window in Knightsbridge, lost in thought—or was it admiration? Imagine *Teufelsdröckh* on bonnets, and his considerations on the occult significance of the Angot cap! Returning home from his afternoon promenade, he reposes until dinner time. This important ceremony over he again wanders out for a short space, and then sits down, not to work, as he puts it, but to read till two o'clock in the morning.

“This is, it must be confessed, a strong programme for a man of Mr Carlyle’s age, for it is eighty-one years since he was born in the room over the archway of the farm-house at Ecclefechan. All his later works have been written at Chelsea, but the book which may perhaps be said to have stamped his reputation, and to be the most Carlylese of all his works, ‘*Sartor Resartus*,’ was written at Craigenputtock, a sober, angular-looking country house almost buried in a huge clump of firs. The inventor of a new style of English composition has always loved his native Dumfriesshire, and it was during

his lonely rambles among its picturesque scenery that his style gradually crystallized into the form which has needed all his genius to make it acceptable. In his essays on Pitt, Montaigne, and Nelson, we see the original genius seeking articulate power in ordinary language; but it is in 'Sartor Resartus' that we see the mind, under German influence, putting on its proper clothing—a garment which fits the imitators of the master like the mantle introduced by the dwarf to the lovely beauties of King Arthur's court.

"The reading preferred by the author of 'Hero-Worship' is almost entirely confined to books. It has been said that it is general enough in character, but the reader is imbued with a certain preference for works in a bound and otherwise complete condition. Of newspapers he, despite his many commendations of the 'able editor,' is no lover. They occupy too much space, and their perusal too much time. *Public Opinion* and *All the Year Round* are the only periodical publications welcomed within the walls of the house in Cheyne Row, and the rhetoric of the leading journals is for the most part lost on the historian of the Seven Years' War. Books, too, apart from a few companions of early life, are valued by him, not as books, as choice editions, and so forth, but simply as shells which, when the kernel is extracted, may be flung away.

"The smallness of Mr Carlyle's library—perhaps the smallest, saving mere books of reference, that ever belonged to a great man of letters—is explained by his magnificent memory. When a book is read, read with that intensity of attention which

he brings to bear upon it, it is no longer of value. He has made it his own. Whatever of fact and truth and life is in it, it is absorbed, and the husk is valueless. The pleasure derived by weaker creatures from the reperusal of favourite books is lost on his vigorous organization. As his readers and companions well know, he rarely quotes on paper, and never cites in 'talk' the exact words of his authorities. They are melted down in the Carlylese furnace, and come out of it in startling flights of graphic description, and in conversation like nothing in the world so much as a kaleidoscope, so rare and original are its combinations of vivid colour. It is this tremendous individuality which accounts for the grip of Thomas Carlyle on many of the foremost minds of England, America, and Germany. Adopting literature as a profession at the comparatively mature age of twenty-eight, he worked ten more years before he gave to the world the lucubrations of Teufelsdröckh. It requires an effort to throw the mind back to that distant date. When 'Sartor Resartus' appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*, and Mr Carlyle first occupied his present dwelling at Chelsea, many men who now rank high in the world of letters were not born. Macaulay had just made his mark in the *Edinburgh Review*. Bulwer had astonished the world with 'Pelham.' Young Disraeli, at the height of his literary reputation, was not yet in the House of Commons. The first Reform Bill had but recently received the Royal assent. The Noctes Ambrosianæ were in full blast. Dickens and Thackeray were unheard of. Of this galaxy of genius but two stars

remain—one shining through the musky atmosphere of politics, the other in the serener firmament of letters.”

The Russo-Turkish war of 1876-7 excited Carlyle's warm interest, and on two occasions he laid his views of various phases of it before the public. The following letter on the Eastern Question was addressed by him to Mr George Howard in November 1876.

“DEAR HOWARD,—It by no means seems so evident to me as it does to you and your friends that an utterance of my opinion on the Eastern crisis could be important; but since you assure me that it might be of service to many persons now in doubt on that matter, I overcome the very great reluctance I had to speak of the subject at all, and will try to indicate summarily what my own poor private views upon it are.

“In the first place, then, for fifty years my clear belief about the Russians has been that they are a good and even noble element in Europe.* Conspicuously they possess the talent of obedience, of silently following orders given, which, in the universal celebration of ballot-box, Divine freedom, &c., will be found an invaluable and peculiar gift. Ever since Peter the Great's appearance among them, they have been in steady process of development. In our own time they have done signal service to God and man in drilling into order and peace anarchic populations all over their side of the

* Cf. “Past and Present,” Book III., Chap. V.

world. The present Czar of Russia I judge to be a strictly honest and just man, and, in short, my belief is that the Russians are called to do great things in the world, and to be a conspicuous benefit, directly or indirectly, to their fellow-men.

“To undertake a war against Russia on behalf of the Turk, it is evident to me, would be nothing short of insanity ; and has become, we may fondly hope, impossible for any Minister or Prime Minister that exists among us. Twenty years ago we already had a mad war in defence of the Turk, a mass of the most hideous and tragic stupidity, mismanagement, and disaster (in spite of bravest fighting) that England was ever concerned in since I knew it ; a hundred millions of money, and about sixty thousand valiant lives were spent in the enterprise. By Treaties of Paris, &c., the Turk was preserved intact, binding himself only to reform his system of government, which certainly, of all things in the world, needed reform. And now, after twenty years of waiting, the Turk is found to have reformed nothing, nor attempted to reform anything: Not to add that by bankrupt finance he has swallowed a disastrous tribute of many new millions from the widows and orphans of England. As finis to all which, he has wound up by the horrors of Bulgaria and such savageries as are without a parallel. With these weighty aggravations the Turkish Question returns upon us anew and demands a solution.

“It seems to me that something very different from war on his behalf is what the Turk now pressingly needs from England and from all the world, namely, to be peremptorily informed that we can

stand no more of his attempts to govern in Europe, and that he must *quam primum* turn his face to the eastward, for ever quit this side of the Hellespont, and give up his arrogant ideas of governing anybody but himself.

“Such immediate and summary expulsion of the Turk from Europe may appear to many too drastic a remedy; but to my mind it is the only one of any real utility under the circumstances. Improved management of these unhappy countries might begin on the morrow after the long continued curse was withdrawn, and the ground left free for wise and honest human effort. The peaceful Mongol inhabitants would, of course, be left in peace, and treated with perfect equity, and even friendly consideration; but the governing Turk, with all his pashas and Bashi-Bazooks, should at once be ordered to disappear from Europe and never to return.

“This result is in the long run inevitable, and it were better to set about it now than to temporize and haggle in the vain hope of doing it cheaper some other time.

“As to the temporary or preparatory government of the recovered provinces, cleared of their unspeakable Turk government, for twenty, or, say, any other term of years, our own experience of India may prove that it is possible, and in a few faithful and skilful hands is even easy. Nor in the temper of the Czar and of the Austrian Emperor need the fair partition of these recovered territories be a cause of quarrel. Austria must expect to become more and more a Slavic and Hungarian

empire, her nine millions of Germans more and more gravitating towards their countrymen of the great German empire. The Czar, whose serious task it is to protect the Christian subjects in Turkey proper, will justly have a claim to territorial footing in the recovered country. To England there is one vital interest, and one only, that of securing its road to India, which depends on Egypt and the Suez Canal.

"The thing to be desired is concord between the three Great Powers, and if, as we hope, there is a mutual trust grounded on honesty of intention on the part of each, none claiming more than in the nature of things belongs to him, we may confidently expect that the difficulties of the business cannot prove insuperable. It seems to me, the advice of Prince Bismarck, a magnanimous, noble, and deep-seeing man, who has no national aims or interests in the matter, might be very valuable; nay, were he appointed arbiter when difficult dissidences arise, what but benefit would be likely to result? But on this portion of the subject I am not called to write.

"The only clear advice I have to give is, as I have stated, that the unspeakable Turk should be immediately struck out of the question, and the country left to honest European guidance, delaying which can be profitable or agreeable only to gamblers on the Stock Exchange, but distressing and unprofitable to all other men.—I remain always, dear Howard, yours truly, T. CARLYLE."

Some months after the foregoing was written,

when a collision between Russia and this country appeared imminent, Carlyle, a second time, made his voice heard on the subject, in the following letter to *The Times* :—

“SIR,—A rumour everywhere prevails that our miraculous Premier, in spite of the Queen’s Proclamation of Neutrality, intends, under cover of ‘care of British interests,’ to send the English fleet to the Baltic, or do some other feat which shall compel Russia to declare war against England. Latterly the rumour has shifted from the Baltic and become still more sinister, on the Eastern side of the scene, where a feat is contemplated, that will force not Russia only, but all Europe, to declare war against us. This latter, I have come to know as an indisputable fact ; in our present affairs and outlooks surely a grave one. As to ‘British interests,’ there is none visible or conceivable to me, except taking strict charge of our route to India by Suez or Egypt ; and, for the rest, resolutely steering clear altogether of any copartnery with the Turk in regard to this or any other ‘British interest’ whatever. It should be felt by England as a real ignominy to be connected with such a Turk at all. Nay, if we still had, as, in fact, all ought to have, a wish to save him from perdition and annihilation in God’s world, the one future for him that has any hope in it, is even now that of being conquered by the Russians, and gradually schooled and drilled into peaceable attempt at learning to be himself governed. The newspaper outcry against Russia is no more respectable to me

than the howling of Bedlam, proceeding, as it does, from the deepest ignorance, egotism, and paltry national jealousy. These things I write, not on hearsay, but on accurate knowledge,* and to all friends of their country will recommend immediate attention to them while there is yet time, lest in a few weeks the maddest and most criminal thing that a British Government could do should be done, and all Europe kindle into flames of war.—
I am, &c., T. CARLYLE."

" 5 CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA,

" May 4, 1877."

From the heat and din of English party politics, Carlyle uniformly and half contemptuously kept himself aloof. It is well known that he held Lord Beaconsfield in no high esteem ; nor was his opinion of his great rival, Mr Gladstone, at all very flattering. In conversation he once described him as "A mean and corrupt ritualist." Probably the only political measure that much interested Carlyle in his old age was the Permissive Bill, of which he frequently expressed warm approval. When invited to attend the inaugural meeting of the Chelsea Permissive Bill Association, he replied: "I cannot attend your meeting, but my complete conviction goes, and for long years has gone, with yours in regard to that matter, and it is one of my most earnest and urgent public wishes that such Bill do become law." Again, when requested to

* Mr Carlyle's "accurate knowledge" is said to have been obtained from Mr Froude, who derived it from a Secretary of State.

become president of the Association, he replied : " Many thanks for your attentions. The pamphlets shall be turned to account, though I myself require no argument or evidence farther on that disgraceful subject. With many acknowledgments I must decline the honour of presidency. From the bottom of my heart I wish you success, complete and speedy." One of the last acts of Carlyle's public life was to have his name affixed to a petition against the admission of a statue of the Prince Imperial into Westminster Abbey.

Within the past few years Carlyle's health had been growing feebler ; and of late even his friends saw little of him. Up to his eightieth year he was very fond of walking, but strength for his walks failed at last, and he had to take exercise in a brougham. About the beginning of February it was seen that death was not far distant. He was assiduously cared for by his niece and her husband, but the time had at length come for his long and brave life to close. On the morning of February 5th, 1881, at half-past eight o'clock, " he passed," to use the beautiful language of his own Essay on Burns, " into that still country, where the hail-storms and fire-showers do not reach, and the heaviest-laden wayfarer at length lays down his load."

At one time, it was thought the body would be laid among the illustrious dead in Westminster Abbey, but this idea was departed from in deference to an indicated wish of Carlyle's. On Thursday, February 10th, his remains were laid in the old churchyard of St Fechains, Ecclefechan, in a

grave between that of his mother and of his brother, John Aitken Carlyle, who died in 1877. The mourners were—Messrs James Carlyle, senior, brother; James Carlyle, junior, nephew; John Carlyle, nephew; Austin, nephew; Robert Carlyle, cousin; Mr Aitken, brother-in-law; Dr Alexander Carlyle; Mr Alexander Welsh, cousin of the late Mrs Carlyle; Professor Tyndall; Captain Henry F. Watt; Mr Froude; and several relatives of the deceased. Since the death of Sir Walter Scott, the grave has closed over no writer more universally honoured and lamented, or who has left behind him a more splendid and stainless name.

The time is not yet come to estimate exactly Carlyle's position among the immortals. The present generation cannot separate the man from his work; his great and noble character casts a glamour over even his least perfect writings which it would not be possible, even were it desirable, to dispel. Of works which extend to over thirty volumes, it is plain much must yet be forgotten. But we are safe to say that after many years, when the dust and refuse shall have been purged away by the slow winnowing fire of oblivion, enough of pure gold will still remain to justify to posterity the verdict of the Victorian era, which declared Thomas Carlyle the greatest teacher of his age.

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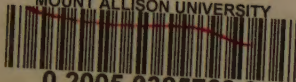
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